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THE
Theological and Miscellaneous
WORKS
OF
JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F.R.S. &c.
WITH
NOTES, BY THE EDITOR.

VOLUME XX.

Containing
CRITICAL DISSERTATIONS
PREFIXED TO A
HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS;
LETTERS TO ARCHBISHOP NEWCOME,
ON THE
Duration of our Saviour's Ministry;
LETTERS AND ADDRESSES TO THE JEWS;
Letters to a Young Man,
&c. &c.

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P93
v. 20

CONTENTS

OF THE TWENTIETH VOLUME.

Critical Dissertations

PREFIXED TO

A HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS.

DEDICATION	-	-	-	-	-	Page
Preface to the Greek Harmony	-	-	-	-	-	3
						6

OBSERVATIONS ON THE HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS.

Sect.						
I.	On the Time of the Birth of Christ	-	-	-	-	19
II.	On the Time of the Death of Christ	-	-	-	-	22
III.	Of Daniel's Prophecy of Seventy Weeks	-	-	-	-	28
IV.	Mr. Lauchlan Taylor's Observations concerning the Length of the Reign of Xerxes, from his Essay on some Passages in the Revelation	-	-	-	-	36
V.	Additional Arguments in Support of the Opinion that Xerxes reigned only Eleven Years, and not Twenty-One	-	-	-	-	42
VI.	Of the Duration of Christ's Ministry	-	-	-	-	47
VII.	Remarks on some of the Arguments of Mr. Mann, with Observations in Confirmation of them	-	-	-	-	51
VIII.	Additional Arguments in Support of the Hypothesis that Christ preached only One Year and a few Months	-	-	-	-	54
IX.	Objections to the preceding Hypothesis considered	-	-	-	-	56
X.	The Order of the principal Events in the Gospel History	-	-	-	-	64
XI.	General preliminary Remarks relating to the Order of the Events in the Gospel History	-	-	-	-	69

Sect.	Page
XII. Observations on the Order of Events before the Mission of the Twelve Apostles - - -	75
1. Of the Time when John the Baptist knew Jesus -	<i>ib.</i>
2. Of the Time when Jesus cured Peter's Wife's Mother - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
3. Of the Time when Jesus visited Nazareth -	76
4. At what Time Jesus entered Capernaum -	78
5. Of the Call of Peter, &c. to attend Jesus -	<i>ib.</i>
6. Of the Sermon on the Mount - -	79
7. Where the Leper was cured - -	80
8. Of the Time when Matthew was called to attend Jesus - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
9. Of the Sabbath on which the Disciples plucked the Ears of Corn, &c. - - -	<i>ib.</i>
10. Of the Discourse concerning the Sin against the Holy Ghost - - -	81
11. Of the Time when the Mother and Brethren of Jesus inquired for him - - -	<i>ib.</i>
12. Of the Observation concerning the Candle and the Bushel, &c. - - -	82
13. Of what followed the Parable of the Sower -	<i>ib.</i>
XIII. Observations concerning the Time of the Mission of the Twelve - - -	83
XIV. Observations on the Order of Events from the Mission of the Twelve Apostles to Jesus's triumphant Entry into Jerusalem - - -	86
1. Of the Duration of John's Imprisonment -	<i>ib.</i>
2. Of the Time when Jesus pronounced the Woe on the Cities of Galilee - - -	87
3. Whither the Disciples went after the feeding of the Five Thousand - - -	<i>ib.</i>
4. Of Jesus's Journey to Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost - - -	<i>ib.</i>
5. Of the proper Place for the Incidents mentioned by Luke (ix. 51—xviii. 14) - - -	88
6. Of the Parables of the Mustard-Seed and the Leaven -	<i>ib.</i>
7. Of the Discourse concerning hating a Man's Father and Mother - - -	89
8. Of the Discourses delivered beyond Jordan -	<i>ib.</i>
9. Of the Place where the Infants were brought to Jesus - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
10. Of the Blind Men cured by Jesus near Jericho -	<i>ib.</i>
11. Of the Parable concerning the Ten Servants and the Ten Talents - - -	90
12. Of the Lamentation of Jesus over Jerusalem -	<i>ib.</i>
13. Of the Supper at Bethany - - -	91
XV. Observations on the Order of Events from the triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, to the Examination of Jesus before the High-Priest - - -	94
1. Of the Purging of the Temple - -	<i>ib.</i>

Sect.		Page
XV.	2. Of the Prophecy concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem - - -	96
	3. Of Jesus's saying to the Jews, "Ye shall not see me, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord" - - -	<i>ib.</i>
	4. Of the Introduction of the Greeks to Jesus, &c. -	97
	5. Whether Judas Iscariot partook of the Lord's Supper - - -	<i>ib.</i>
	6. Of the Time when Jesus foretold Peter's Denial of him - - -	99
	7. Of the Day of the Passover in the Passion-Week -	100
	8. Of the Transactions of the Wednesday in the Passion-Week - - -	103
	9. Of the Supper at which Jesus washed his Disciples' Feet - - -	104
XVI.	Observations on the Order of Events from the Examination of Jesus before the High-Priest, to the Conclusion of the History - - -	105
	1. Of the Insults which Jesus received at the House of the High-Priest - - -	<i>ib.</i>
	2. Of the Circumstances attending Peter's Denial of Jesus - - -	<i>ib.</i>
	3. Of the Circumstances which attended the Resurrection of Jesus - - -	107
XVII.	A Computation of the Time that was necessary for the Purpose of Christ's Ministry - -	110
LETTERS TO ARCHBISHOP NEWCOME ON THE DURATION OF OUR SAVIOUR'S MINISTRY.		
<i>TWO LETTERS TO DR. NEWCOME BISHOP OF WATERFORD, LATE OF OSSERY.</i>		
Letter I.	- - -	121
Letter II.	- - -	137
Sect.		
I.	Of the Testimony of the Christian Fathers -	138
II.	Of the Conduct of Luke in giving a Date to the Preaching of John the Baptist -	148
III.	Of the Ignorance of Herod, and of other Jews, concerning Jesus, at the Time of the Death of John the Baptist - - -	150
IV.	Of the Interpolation of the word Passover in John vi. 4 -	156
V.	Of the Transposition of the 5th and 6th Chapters of the Gospel of John - - -	164
VI.	Of Journeys supposed to be omitted in Dr. Priestley's Harmony - - -	167
VII.	Of the Number of Miles that Jesus has been supposed to travel per Day - - -	169
VIII.	Of References to more than two Passovers in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke - -	171
IX.	Of the Argument for the probable Duration of our Saviour's Ministry, from the Objects of it -	174
X.	Of the Transactions at the first Passover - -	178

Sect.		Page
XI.	Of the stay that Jesus made in Judea after the first Passover - - - - -	182
XII.	Of the Journey from Judea to Galilee - -	185
XIII.	Whether Jesus visited Capernaum or Nazareth first -	187
XIV.	Of the Harmony of the Gospels according to the Ancients, especially Eusebius and Epiphanius, and some of the Moderns who have most nearly fol- lowed them - - - - -	190

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

XV.	1. Of the first Excursion from Capernaum - -	196
	2. Of the Time of the Journey to Nain - -	197
	3. Of the second Sabbath after the first - -	<i>ib.</i>
	4. Of the Disciples of John - - - -	198
	The Conclusion - - - - -	199

A THIRD LETTER TO DR. NEWCOME, *Bishop of Waterford.*

I.	Of the Testimony of the Christian Fathers - -	201
II.	Of the Conduct of Luke in giving a Date to the Preach- ing of John the Baptist, &c. - - -	204
III.	Of the Ignorance of Herod, and of other Jews, con- cerning Jesus, at the Time of the Death of John the Baptist - - - - -	206
IV.	Of the Interpolation of the Word Passover in John vi. 4 - - - - -	208
V.	Of the Transposition of the 5th and 6th Chapters of the Gospel of John - - - -	210
VI.	Of Journeys supposed to be omitted in Dr. Priestley's Harmony - - - - -	212
VII.	Of the Number of Miles that Jesus has been supposed to travel per Day - - - - -	213
IX.	Of the Argument for the probable Duration of our Saviour's Ministry, from the Objects of it - -	214
X.	Of the Transactions at the first Passover - -	<i>ib.</i>
XI.	Of the Stay that Jesus made in Judea, after the first Passover - - - - -	216
XII.	Of the Journey from Judea to Galilee - -	217
XIII.	Whether Jesus visited Nazareth or Capernaum first -	218
XIV.	Of the Harmony of the Gospels according to the Ancients, &c. - - - - -	219

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

XV.	1. Of the first excursion from Capernaum - -	220
	2. Of the second Sabbath after the first - -	<i>ib.</i>
	The Conclusion - - - - -	221

LETTERS AND ADDRESSES TO THE JEWS.

LETTERS TO THE JEWS. PART I.

Letter		
I.	Of the peculiar Privileges of the Jewish Nation, and the Causes of their Prejudices against Christianity	227

Letter	Page
II. Of the present dispersed and calamitous State of the Jewish Nation - - - - -	231
III. Of the Historical Evidences of the Divine Mission of Christ - - - - -	234
IV. Of the Doctrine concerning the Messiah - - - - -	242
V. Miscellaneous Observations and Conclusion - - - - -	244

LETTERS TO THE JEWS. PART II.

I. Of Mr. Levi's want of Candour, his Ignorance of Profane Literature and of the New Testament, and of his requiring Unanimity in the Opinions of Christians - - - - -	251
II. Of the Miraculous Conception of Jesus, and of Contradictions in the Gospel History - - - - -	254
III. Of the Miracles of Jesus as a Proof of his Divine Mission, and of Mr. Levi's Objections to some of them - - - - -	256
IV. Of the supposed Contradictions between Jesus and Moses - - - - -	260
V. Of the Sufferings of the Jewish Nation - - - - -	264
VI. Of Daniel's Prophecy of Seventy Weeks - - - - -	269
VII. The Conclusion - - - - -	272
ADDRESS TO THE JEWS, 1791 - - - - -	275
ADDRESS TO THE JEWS, 1799 - - - - -	281

LETTERS TO A YOUNG MAN.

PART I. OCCASIONED BY Mr. WAKEFIELD'S ESSAY ON PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Preface - - - - -	303
Letter	
I. Of the natural Propriety of Social Prayer - - - - -	314
II. Of the Jewish Worship - - - - -	315
III. Objections to Social Prayer from the Sayings of Christ - - - - -	317
IV. Of the Practice of the Apostles - - - - -	320
V. Of the Expediency and Use of Public Worship - - - - -	322
VI. Of Ostentation in Religion - - - - -	328
<i>The Observance of the Lord's Day vindicated</i> - - - - -	330
<i>Remarks on Mr. Evanson's Letter on the Observance of the Lord's Day</i> - - - - -	345

PART II. OCCASIONED BY Mr. EVANSON'S DISSONANCE.

Preface - - - - -	352
I. Of the Nature of Historical Evidence, illustrated by that of the Propagation of Christianity - - - - -	360
II. Of the Authenticity of the Four Gospels in general - - - - -	366
III. Of the Preference given by Mr. Evanson to the Gospel of Luke - - - - -	377
IV. Of the Gospel of Matthew in general - - - - -	384
V. Of Mr. Evanson's Objections to particular Passages in the Gospel of Matthew, as contradictory to Passages in the Gospel of Luke - - - - -	389

Letter	Page
VI. Of the Ignorance and Inconsistencies that Mr. Evanson imagines he has discovered in the Gospel according to Matthew - - - -	403
VII. Of the Things that Mr. Evanson objects to as unworthy of our Saviour in the Gospel of Matthew -	417
VIII. Of Mr. Evanson's Objections to the Gospel of Mark -	425
IX. Of Mr. Evanson's Objections to the Gospel of John -	430
X. Of Mr. Evanson's Objections to the Epistle to the Romans - - - -	446
XI. Of Mr. Evanson's Objections to some other Epistles in the New Testament - - - -	451
XII. Of the arbitrary Proceeding of Mr. Evanson in making the Gospel of Luke his Standard by which to examine the other Gospels - - - -	456
LETTER TO AN ANTIPÆDOBAPTIST - -	463
Sect.	
I. Presumptive Evidence in favour of the Antiquity of Infant Baptism - - - -	467
II. Arguments of a more direct Nature - - - -	471
III. Objections to the preceding Arguments - - - -	482
IV. Of the Origin of Antipædobaptism - - - -	485
V. On Dipping or Sprinkling, and of the Obligation of the Rite of Baptism itself - - - -	488

APPENDIX.

No.	
I. A short Sketch of the Life of Dr. Price, with an Account of all his Publications - - - -	493
II. Introduction to Essays on the Harmony - - - -	502
III. Mr. Mann on the Duration of Christ's Ministry - - - -	504
IV. Preface to the English Harmony - - - -	508
V. On the Causes of Transposition - - - -	510
VI. A Letter from the Rev. Mr. John Palmer to Dr. Priestley - - - -	512
VII. Mr. Mann's Arguments for the Opinion that Christ purged the Temple only once, and that at the last Passover - - - -	513
VIII. On Transpositions in Ancient MSS. - - - -	515
IX. The Preface to the Discourse on the Resurrection of Jesus - - - -	517
X. Remarks on some Passages in Mr. Evanson's Letter to the Bishop of Worcester - - - -	521
XI. Of the Date of Luke's Gospel - - - -	523
XII. Of the Identity of Luke and Silas - - - -	524
XIII. Observations on Infant Baptism - - - -	<i>ib.</i>



CRITICAL DISSERTATIONS

PREFIXED TO

A Harmony

OF

THE EVANGELISTS.



[*London, 1777 and 1780.*]

TO THE

REV. RICHARD PRICE, D.D.* F.R.S.



REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

PERMIT me, as a mark of our *friendship*,† and of our *love of the same studies*, to inscribe this work to you. It is not that I wish to screen myself behind your authority, or to make you responsible for what is new, and may be thought too bold or hazardous in the *opinions* maintained in it; but I wish to have your countenance for the *freedom* with which I have treated this subject, and especially for what I have said relating to the *inspiration of the books of Scripture*. This opinion is not only a bar to freedom of inquiry, but has operated in a manner very unfavourable to the credibility of the Gospel history. With respect to other matters of a speculative nature, relating to Christianity, I cannot be more ready to take, than you are to allow and encourage, the greatest freedom of thinking and writing, and, consequently, the most open and avowed difference of *sentiment*; since what is most essential to the Christian *temper and conduct*, is perfectly consistent with this difference.

In a variety of articles in *metaphysics* and *speculative theology*, it is probable that, having, at an early period, embraced very different general principles, you and I shall continue through life to hold very different opinions, and with respect to their influence in a theoretical system, we may lay considerable stress upon them; but we agree in a firm belief of Christianity, and of the infinite importance of it to the virtue and happiness of mankind.

* See a "Short Sketch of the Life of Dr. Price," *Appendix*, No. I.

† Dr. Priestley describes himself as having enjoyed Dr. Price's "particular friendship," on his visits to London during his "residence at Leeds." He had been introduced to his acquaintance some years before by Dr. Benson, about 1761. See Vol. I. *Memoirs*, 44, 81, 114.

How justly Dr. Priestley estimated such a friendship, the ardour of which no differences of opinion, however important, could abate, has appeared in several of the preceding volumes. See Vol. III. p. 210; IV. pp. 4, 14, 121; XV. pp. 439, 441, 444, 451, 474; XVIII. pp. 370, 416.

Whether Christ was a man like ourselves, or a being of a higher rank, but between which and the Supreme there is still the same infinite distance, the authority of the Gospel precepts, promises, and sanctions, is the same, and the highest possible, viz. that of the *great Being* by whom Christ spake, who is *his God and Father* as well as ours; and who, if we obey his will revealed to us in the Gospel, will love and honour us, as he loves and honours him.

I think myself happy in being united with you in the pursuit of *natural science*,* and in an attachment to the natural *rights and liberties of mankind*;† but I trust we shall

* On Dr. Price's contributions to the *Philosophical Transactions*, see Mr. Morgan's *Memoirs*, 1815, pp. 38, 39. He was one of the four members on whose recommendation Dr. Priestley was introduced "into the Royal Society." See Vol. I. *Memoirs*, 84.

† According to Mr. Morgan, (*Memoirs*, p. 50,) till the American War, "Dr. Price had taken no active part in political contentions," though, "as a friend to liberty, he always felt himself warmly interested in its support, and freely expressed his abhorrence of every attempt to encroach upon it." In 1776, appeared his "Observations on Civil Liberty, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America," of which, "in the course of a few days, several thousands were sold," and, "by means of the cheap edition, near 60,000 copies," in a few months. In 1777, "that very equivocal friend of liberty, Mr. Edmund Burke," says Mr. Morgan, "took occasion, in his letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, [p. 47,] to censure some of Dr. Price's principles on the origin of government." *Ibid.* pp. 58, 62.

To the *Observations*, Dr. Jebb thus referred in his "Address to the Freeholders of Middlesex," 1779: "The arts that have been used to inflame the minds of the people of England against their brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, have hitherto proved but too successful. I trust, however, they now begin to fail, and that a temper, more becoming the ancient generosity and humanity of our nation, and more congenial to the spirit of the religion we profess, will actuate our counsels. The great, the good Dr. Price has so ably touched this subject, that it would be presumption in me to add any further reflections of my own. To his sound and catholic doctrine, I subscribe with heart and hand." Dr. Disney's *Works of John Jebb, M. D. F. R. S.* II. p. 484, *Note*.

In 1783, Dr. Price joined "the Earl of Effingham, Major Cartwright, Dr. Jebb, and Mr. Wyvill in giving "their sentiments" to "the Volunteers of Ireland, on the proposed reform in the parliament of that kingdom." *Ibid.* (*Mem.*) I. p. 186.

When I referred to Dr. Price's justly famous discourse, (see Vol. XV. p. 440, *Notes*,) my memory did not serve me sufficiently, or I should then have opposed to the calumnies of Burke, the approbation of Sir William Jones, as expressed, on the perusal of that discourse, in the following letter. On the authority of a friend who had the original in his possession, before it passed into the hands of Sir William Jones's noble biographer, I am now able to restore a passage which I here place between brackets, and which it will be easily believed that Lord Teignmouth was too much of a courtier not to have omitted:

"Sir William Jones to Dr. Price.

"MY DEAR SIR,

Chrisna-nagur, Sept. 14, 1790.

"I give you my warmest thanks for your friendly letter, and acceptable present of an admirable discourse, which I have read with great delight. [Since the late glorious Revolution in France, I cannot help applying to my poor infatuated country the words which Tully formerly applied to Gaul: 'Ex omnibus teris *Britannia sola communi non ardet incendio*']]

"We have twenty millions (I speak with good information) of Indian subjects,

both of us ever act upon the idea of the inferiority of all the civil rights of *men* to the privileges of *Christians*, and of the insignificance of all things *temporal* compared with things *eternal*.*

I am, with the greatest esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate, humble servant,

Calne, Jan. 1776.

J. PRIESTLEY.

whose laws I am now compiling and arranging, in the hope of securing their property to themselves and their heirs. They are pleased with the work; but it makes me a very bad correspondent. I had flattered myself with a hope of making a visit to our venerable friend at Philadelphia, before the retreat which I meditate to my humble cottage in Middlesex; but God's will be done. We shall meet, I devoutly hope, in a happier state." *Life*, 1806, p. 340. See Vol. XVII. p. 157, *Note* *.

Sir W. Jones's and Dr. Price's "venerable friend" was, no doubt, Dr. Franklin, of whose death, at Philadelphia, April 17th, this year, (1790,) Sir W. Jones could scarcely have been apprized. I cannot deny myself the pleasure of once more bringing together two names so worthy of perpetual remembrance, by adding, as preserved by Mr. Morgan, the extract of a letter from Sir W. Jones to Dr. Price, dated *Christa-nagur*, 26th September, 1788:

"I have lately read with delight a book in which all Christians are interested; a volume of sermons preached by you, and shewing the goodness both of your heart, and of your judgment. I anxiously hope that I shall see you in perfect health some years hence on my return to Europe, where (despairing of public liberty) I shall, by God's blessing, pass the rest of my life in studying those parts of knowledge which are connected with the duty of good citizens, and in conversing with you and a few others who love their country better than their interest." *Memoirs*, p. 115.

* I well remember to have heard Dr. Price thus eloquently contrast those objects, when preaching on a public occasion, from 2 *Peter* i. 11, and iii. 13:

"The mightiest empires," said the preacher, "have fallen, and the best formed societies, after enjoying liberty and prosperity for a time, have been ruined either by foreign violence, or the more slow operations of internal corruption.—But that future government in the heavens—will be subject to no calamitous revolutions. It will preserve for ever its order and dignity, without the possibility of being disturbed by any tumults, or shaken by any convulsions—

"What a theatre of tumult and confusion is this world! On one hand the lust of power invading the rights of mankind; on the other, fierce defiance and resistance. In one country a haughty despot ordering a general carnage to gratify his avarice or pride; in another, a wicked incendiary fomenting discord and disgracing patriotism. Here a body of crouching slaves looking up to a king as a God, and bowing down that he may go over them; there, a nation of freemen enraged by oppression, flying to arms, and in the conflict giving their oppressors blood to drink.—These are spectacles which are, indeed, enough to make us sick of human affairs. Turn your eyes from them to brighter scenes. From the din of arms and the triumphs of tyranny; from the shouts of warriors, and the cries of plundered citizens; from the insolence of courts and the pride of princes, transfer your views to the tranquillity and order of Christ's everlasting kingdom." See "A Sermon addressed to a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters at Hackney, on February 21, 1781, being the Day appointed for a General Fast." Pp. 16, 20, 21.

Thus did Dr. Price exemplify the *parish priest* of *Dryden*:

"For, letting down the golden chain from high,
He drew his audience upward to the sky."

PREFACE*

TO

THE GREEK HARMONY.

[1777.]

WHATEVER may be thought of the work which I now present to the public, I can assure my readers that there is hardly any subject on which I have bestowed more *pains*, or to which I have given more *time*: and I never bestowed my labour or time with more satisfaction to myself, whatever may result from it with respect to others.

The *harmony of the four Gospels*, or the reducing the history of our Saviour, as delivered by the four evangelists, *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John*, to the order of time in which the events really happened, has been a favourite object with critics, even from the very early ages of Christianity; and since the revival of letters in Europe, the number of harmonists has been so great, that the enumeration of them would be tedious.

Nor shall we wonder at the attention that has been given to this subject, when we consider how very important a history that of Christ is, infinitely more so than that of any other man that ever lived on the face of the earth; in comparison with whom kings, lawgivers, or philosophers, appear as nothing. On this account, those who entertain a just value for the character of Christ, and a proper idea of their obligation to him, are interested in every circumstance relating to his history. They can never be weary of contemplating it, and are not satisfied without viewing it in every possible light, important or not important; as indeed is the case, in some measure, with respect to every person in whose history we take a part. For this I appeal to the feelings of all those who interest themselves in the history of the dead.

What pains have been taken by classical critics to ascertain the exact dates of the most trivial incidents in the life of Cicero, and other persons of eminence in ancient or

* See Introduction to *Essays on the Harmony*, 1769, Appendix, No. II.

modern history! The motive to all this pains could be nothing but the *interest* they took, and which they imagined their readers would take, in the lives of those heroes, and the desire that unavoidably results from it, of having as precise and definite an idea as possible of every thing in which they were concerned. This is easily accounted for on the principle of the *association of ideas*, by means of which unimportant circumstances acquire a degree of importance from their relation to an important character.

But it is not on this account only that we receive this satisfaction from an orderly narrative of the life of Christ: for even the *credibility* of the history is, in some measure, concerned in it. If the separate histories be all true, they will be found to agree as far as other credible histories of the same transaction are found to do. But if the different histories of the life of Christ be utterly irreconcilable in things of consequence, that is, in things of such a nature, as that persons who lived in those times, could not but have been well acquainted with, and have attended to, they will not be entitled to credit. In a variety of other respects also, the credibility of the Gospel history may be evinced or illustrated, from a comparison of the different accounts of the same transactions; and every circumstance of this kind will give pleasure to a friend of Christianity.

We shall not wonder that the chronological order of events in the life of Christ should have been lost, when we consider that the capital *uses* of the gospel did not require that the writers of them should adhere strictly to the order of time, and that two of the historians, viz. *Mark* and *Luke*, are not supposed to have been present at the transactions, and therefore might never have known, with accuracy, what the order of events was. Still, however, the Gospel history abounds so much with *notes of time*, which, without an express care to prevent it, could not but mix themselves with the narration, (having been originally and necessarily associated with the particulars of it,) and there is in these, as in all other genuine histories that are equally full of business, such a constant reference to particular persons, places, and times, so frequent a mention of the seasons of the year, public festivals, &c. &c., that a sagacious reader will find *data* enow for the orderly arrangement of every thing of much consequence, though there will still be much uncertainty with respect to the disposition of some things, the exact place of which is of little moment.

There would not have been so much difference in the

harmonies of the evangelists, if their authors had not framed them on very different general hypotheses. Two of these appear to me to be particularly ill founded, and yet they have prevailed so much, that I think it worth while briefly to animadvert upon them.

Osiander,* among the more ancient harmonists, and Dr. *Macknight*,† among the modern, go upon the supposition that all the evangelists relate every thing in chronological order, so that little or nothing is to be transposed in any of them; and to obviate the many difficulties that must occur to every person who considers this scheme of a harmony, (as, from the same principle, they are obliged to maintain the exact truth of every minute circumstance in all the accounts,) they suppose that all incidents agreeing in ever so many circumstances, but differing in any one particular, were really distinct, and must be referred to a different time: and from this source they multiply many discourses and miracles, which others have thought to be the same; alleging, and justly enough, the probability of our Saviour having repeated the same *discourses* or *miracles*, but not considering the natural improbability of a great number of the same *external foreign circumstances* accompanying such discourses or miracles.

Such harmonists make no difficulty of multiplying such incidents as those of our Saviour's clearing the temple of buyers and sellers, as often as they have occasion for it, (and yet as none of the evangelists give the least hint of his having done this more than once, I do not think that we have sufficient authority for supposing that even this event happened twice,) but it appears to me that, by the same rule, we might make more than one baptism of Jesus, more than one institution of the Lord's supper, more than one crucifixion, and more than one resurrection.

The foundation of this hypothesis is such a notion of the *inspiration* of the Gospels, and other books of Scripture, as appears to me to be equally indefensible and unnecessary; and I cannot help thinking that the endeavours of the friends of revelation to demonstrate the perfect harmony of the historical books of Scripture, and to remove every

* Andrew Osiander, a native of Bavaria, who published in 1545, "*Harmonia Evangelica cum Annot. Libello.*" This work was republished, "*Gr. Lat. cum Elencho,*" in 1561. *Osiander* died in 1552, aged 54.

† James Macknight, minister of Maybole, N. B., published in 1756 the "*Harmony of the Four Gospels, in which the natural Order of each is preserved; with a Paraphrase and Notes.*" This work was reprinted in 1763 and 1804. There was a Latin translation at Bremen in 1772. The author died in 1800, aged 79.

minute contradiction in them, (so as to exclude from the writers every difference of opinion, and every different conception concerning any fact, or the smallest circumstance relating to a fact,) have not only been unsuccessful, and have thereby given the enemies of revelation a manifest advantage; but that, even if they could have succeeded to their wish, the result would, in reality, have been unfavourable to the proper defence of revelation, with those who duly consider the nature of historical evidence.

When a number of persons agree in their account of the principal circumstances of any transaction, of which they pretend to have been equally witnesses, it is a strong presumption that they do not impose upon us; because the *capital* circumstances of things are well known to engage the attention of all beholders alike. But if they agree in their account of every *minute* circumstance, it rather affords a suspicion that they have had some communication with one another, and have agreed together to tell the same story, in the very same manner; that, therefore, the number of proper *independent witnesses* is not so great, and consequently that the account is not so much to be depended upon. Because little circumstances are not apt to engage the attention of all beholders alike, and therefore we find, in fact, that whenever eye-witnesses attend to minute particulars, they always do vary in their accounts.

No two persons ever gave exactly the same account of any considerable transaction, though they had the same opportunity of being well informed concerning it. On this account, differences in the narration of lesser circumstances seem to be as necessary to *complete and satisfactory evidence*, as an agreement with respect to what is capital and essential to any story. Nay, in many cases, the more persons differ in their accounts of some things, the more conclusive and satisfactory is their evidence with respect to those things in which they agree.

It appears to me that the history of the evangelists has this complete evidence. They agree in their account of every circumstance of importance, which shews that their histories were written by men who were either themselves witnesses of the transactions they record, or were well informed concerning them by those who were witnesses; and yet their style and manner of writing, their more full or more concise account of discourses, together with their very different arrangement of the parts of their narrative, and their disagreement with respect to facts of small conse-

quence, demonstrate, in my opinion, that (excepting *John*, who is well known to have written some time after the rest of the evangelists) they had no communication with one another, and therefore that they are to be considered as original and independent witnesses of the same facts.

It will, I doubt not, appear in the course of my own observations, that transactions unquestionably the same, are related with circumstances that are absolutely incompatible; so that I will venture to say that, in spite of all the ingenuity in the world, their perfect *consistency*, and consequently this high notion of the *inspiration* of the writers, is indefensible. This hypothesis, therefore, not being supported by fact, must necessarily be given up. The very determination to defend a notion loaded with such difficulties as these, discovers such a disposition to defend an hypothesis *at all events*, as must prejudice the minds of unbelievers against a history so absurdly contended for.

Besides, this high notion of inspiration is as *unnecessary*, with respect to the proper use of the Gospel history, as it is indefensible in itself. All the great ends of the Gospel will be sufficiently answered, if provision be made for the credibility of the *principal facts*, such as the reality of the *moral discourses*, and especially of the *miracles*, *death*, and *resurrection* of Christ, as a proof of his divine mission, and a confirmation of our faith in the assurances he has given us with respect to a *general resurrection*, and his second coming to *judge the world, and to reward all men according to their works*. And it is certainly sufficient to produce this belief, that a competent number of persons, having sufficient opportunity of observing and distinguishing the facts, attest the truth of them, and that the subsequent history should shew that the publication of these facts produced such an effect upon the minds and conduct of those to whom they were properly proposed, as might be expected from the consideration of their characters and circumstances. But the credibility of such leading facts as those above-mentioned will not be affected by any difference that may be observed in the Gospel historians, with respect to lesser circumstances attending them.

Now, it seems to have been the plan of Divine Providence, never to provide *miracles* where *natural causes* were sufficient to procure the desired effect. And certainly *twelve persons* expressly chosen to attend our Lord, during the whole of his public ministry, in order to be witnesses of his life, discourses, death, and resurrection, besides the in-

numerable multitudes that must necessarily have been witnesses to many of them, without any express appointment, were *naturally* sufficient to ensure the credibility of all the great events above-mentioned. No other history is attended with any evidence that can be compared with that of the Gospel; and, admitting the Gospel history, on account of its greater importance, to require a stronger evidence, still nothing can be necessary but a stronger evidence *of the same kind*, or human testimony more abundant and more favourably circumstanced.

Admitting that, if the whole credibility of the Gospel history, as we receive it, rested on *divine*, independent of *human* testimony, something might be gained, it is evident that we *now* receive the Gospel history on the faith of human testimony only. For the early *transcribers* of the Gospels were no more inspired than our *printers*; and in the course of time that has elapsed from the first promulgation of Christianity to the present age, copies of the Gospel have been so often transmitted from one to another, that a succession of human authorities so great as to exceed all computation, must have intervened, since the first writing of the Gospels to their coming into our hands. Since, therefore, Divine Providence has thought proper to entrust this valuable deposit in human hands, for so many centuries, how can it be thought inconsistent with the same plan, to convey it to us in a similar manner from the very beginning; the apostles being naturally as capable of relating and writing an account of what they heard and saw, as other persons could be to copy the account after them?

I own I can see no meaning or *consistency* in the appointment of *witnesses* to accompany our Lord, in order to transmit to posterity an authentic and credible account of his life, doctrine, and miracles, if, after all, it was the intention of the Divine Being to supersede this testimony, by *books* bearing sufficient marks of *supernatural inspiration*. In reality, one single book, the divine inspiration of which was fully proved, would render all other evidence superfluous.

It is objected to these arguments, that if we once suppose that the evangelists may not be absolutely depended upon, with respect to any particulars in their history, they cannot be depended upon at all. But if there was any real foundation for this objection, we should give up all faith in history. For there is no period in any history, written by different persons, but several events have been differently

represented ; and yet it is not *fact* that our faith in history is shaken by this circumstance.

To use an example : some contemporary historians say, that, in the battle of Marston Moor, [1644,] prince Rupert commanded in the *right* wing, while others place him in the *left* ; and they give a different account of several incidents in that engagement, depending upon that position. But though, on this account, it should not be in our power to determine in which of the wings it was that this general fought, does it therefore follow that there was no battle on Marston Moor, that the king's forces were not defeated in that battle, or even that the prince did not command in it ? This will not be pretended.

In like manner, though it should be found that, according to one evangelist, Christ purged the temple on the day of his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, whereas, according to another of them, this was not done till the day after, will it therefore follow that we have no reason to believe that he did purge the temple at all ? Or, because all the evangelists express the inscription which Pilate put upon the cross of Christ in different words, must we conclude that there was no inscription upon it, or that Christ was not crucified at all ? And because the evangelists seem to have had different ideas of the manner in which the resurrection of our Lord was announced to the apostles, and especially concerning the vision of angels on that occasion, will it follow that they were so far incompetent witnesses, that we have no reason to believe that there was a resurrection ?

I appeal to any person's feelings, whether even the fullest conviction of such variations as these would tend to produce any incredulity with respect to facts of any consequence, in which all the accounts agree. The most perfect faith in all great events will admit of very great latitude with respect to smaller ones ; so that there is no occasion to fix any *boundary* where certain persuasion terminates, and where uncertainty begins. In this respect the Gospel history exactly resembles all other credible histories ; and indeed, being equally addressed to the feelings of human beings, there can be no reason why there should be any difference between them in this respect.

It is alleged, that there was a particular express promise made by our Lord to his apostles, that *the Spirit of truth should lead them into all truth, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he said unto them.* (John xiv. 26.) But both the reason of the thing, and the fact itself, may

satisfy us, that this promise could only respect things of consequence, and probably (as the excellent author of the *Five Letters on Inspiration* supposes) such things as the apostles were not at that time able fully to comprehend, and therefore were most likely to forget.* For, with respect to *particular expressions*, all the evangelists report our Lord's discourses with very great variations. And, provided the great *end* of our Lord's commission and doctrines was not injured by those different representations of things, no real harm could arise from them, and therefore no valuable end would have been gained by such an interposition of Divine Providence as would have prevented them. Agreeably, therefore, to all that we know, or can infer, concerning the

* "We must not understand by *all truths*, any others than those which the apostles were ignorant of, and which it was useful for them to know, that they might be able to acquit themselves as they ought to do of their charge."

"The most simple sense, and most conformable to the accomplishment of this promise, which can be given to these words, is, to my thinking, this: 'I should explain many things to you more clearly than I have done, but you are not yet in condition to receive them as you should. When you shall have received the Spirit of miracles, he will teach you the rest that you ought to know; either by visions, or by making you call to mind that which I have told you; so that he will make you apprehend the sense, and will teach you what you ought to do afterwards. To speak properly, he will tell you nothing new; he will but recall into your memory, to make you better understand it, the doctrine of my Father; which is the same that I have taught you; and which I may also call my doctrine, because my Father has charged me to preach it, as the only Doctor of his Church.'" See "Five Letters concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; translated out of French," 1690, pp. 56, 66, 67.

This translation gave occasion, in 1692, to "A Vindication of the Divine Authority and Inspiration of the Writings of the O. and N. Testament, by William Lowth, B. D.," the *commentator*, who says, (p. 287,) more like a *Churchman* than a *Protestant*, that "the publishers of such tracts" as the *Five Letters* "ought to publish them in the *learned languages*, that none but scholars may read them."

These *Letters*, published anonymously, were written by *Le Clerc*. The two first were XI. XII. of XX. Letters, entitled, "Sentimens de quelques Théologiens de Hollande sur l'Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament, composée par Mr. Richard Simon, Prêtre," 1685 and 1711. The other three were IX. X. XI. of XVII. Letters, entitled, "Défense des Sentimens de quelques Théologiens de Hollande sur l'Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament, contre la Réponse du Prieur de Bolleville," 1686. *Prieur de Bolleville* was a name assumed by F. Simon. See *Five Letters*, pp. 3—6; "Joannis Clerici, Philosophiæ et S. Lingua, apud Remonstrantes, Amstelodami Professoris Vita et Opera ad Annum MDCCXI. Amici ejus Opusculum, Philosophicis Clerici Operibus subjiaciendum." *Amst.* 1711, pp. 50—54, 246, 247.

Le Clerc, in his assumed character of a friend, referring, in the following passage, to the censures passed on him for the *Letters on Inspiration*, takes occasion to honour the memory of *John Locke* :

"Sed nec quod nonnulli scripserunt in *Dissertationem de Inspiratione Scripturæ Sacrorum*, quam *Dissertationem* inseruerat *Epistolis XI. et XII.* ad se pertinere deinde putavit. Hac in re, ἀνταρραγών, ut sic dicam, induit, quā veritati, undecumque adfulgeret, excipiendæ æquo animo paratum se esse ostendit. Ac sanè quod eximius Philosophus *Joan. Lockius* nuper rectè dixit, ἀνταρραγέω nos, quod adinet ad locum unde illucescit veritas, hujusque solius amore capi, si vel ab inimicis, adversariisque veniat, oportet. Nostrā tantum interest non errare, nihil interest quem veritatis doctorem habeamus." *Ibid.* p. 52.

rules of the Divine proceeding, no such interposition would be granted.

I own that I lay a good deal of stress upon these considerations, and think that by giving up the opinion of the inspiration of the evangelists, *as writers*, we gain two very considerable advantages; the first is, that we place the Gospel history on the same unexceptionable footing with other credible histories, resting on *independent testimonies*, in consequence of their agreement in all things of importance, and appearing to be independent of each other, by their disagreement in things of no importance.* In the second place, we, by this means, disencumber the evidence of the Gospel history of many objections; insignificant, indeed, in themselves, but rendered of the greatest magnitude, and even absolutely insuperable, by our professing to maintain the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. By this means, therefore, we secure, in the most effectual manner, the evidence of all the important facts in the Gospel history; and the rest will either follow of course, or their credibility may be safely neglected.

For these reasons, I cannot but greatly disapprove of every plan of a harmony of the Gospels which goes upon the supposition that those writers were incapable of relating the same story with any inconsistency in the circumstances of it, and especially that they all wrote in true chronological order, so that we are not at liberty even to transpose any part of their narratives. The learned *Michaelis* says, "Osiander is at the head of those who have discredited the Gospel history by their harmonies. However, he went not so far as his successors, but sometimes departs from his principles."† Dr. Macknight has pursued this plan of a

* Thus *Le Clerc* concludes Letter XI. of his *Défense*, the last on this subject: "Voilà donc la religion Chrétienne établie d'une manière invincible, sans supposer aucune inspiration dans l'histoire des apôtres et de nôtre Seigneur.—Il faut être à l'égard des apôtres dans la même disposition, que nous sommes à l'égard de quelque personne dont la sincérité nous est connue, que nous saurions refuser de croire lors qu'elle nous assure de quelque chose qu'elle a vu et qu'elle a oui, et où il est moralement impossible qu'elle se soit trompée." *Défense*, 1686, p. 303.

"Thus, then, you see the Christian religion established, after an invincible manner, without supposing any inspiration in the histories of our Lord and his apostles—It is necessary only that we have the same disposition of mind towards the apostles, that we have towards any person whose sincerity is very well known to us, and whom we could not refuse to believe when he should assure us of a thing he had seen and heard, and in which it is morally impossible that he should be deceived." *Five Letters*, 1690, p. 238. See Vol. II. p. 210, and *Baxter's* liberal opinions, on this subject, in his *Saints' Rest*, quoted *ibid.* p. 211, Note *.

† *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, p. 210. (P.) *Introd. Lect.* 1780, p. 180. *Michaelis* had premised that *Osiander* "took for granted the principle, that the evangelists wrote always in chronological order, and that the same transactions and discourses happened twice or thrice in the life of Christ." *Ibid.*

harmony to its utmost extent; and yet his work seems, upon the whole, to have been very well received.* But though, for these reasons, I cannot but exceedingly disapprove of his *harmony*, I think he is often very happy as a *commentator*.

It is hardly necessary to observe, that in what I have advanced above, I am far from denying *all* inspiration; but only the universal and infallible inspiration of the scripture historians as *writers*. When the prophets or apostles worked miracles, or delivered prophecies, and other messages from God, they must have been inspired. Paul also seems to say, that he received his knowledge of the Gospel, by a personal communication from Christ, after his resurrection.

2. Other harmonists take it for granted that *Luke* is the most orderly and strictly chronological, of all the Gospel historians, chiefly because, in the beginning of his Gospel, he says that, having examined every thing with care, he proposed to write of them *in order* (καθεξῆς). But admitting that by this phrase he really meant to express his attention to exact chronological order, it does not follow that he was qualified to execute this design with accuracy. Besides, there is no reason to think that he had that idea of the word, because it does not necessarily convey that meaning.

To judge by the history itself, it is evident that there are fewer marks of an orderly narrative in the Gospel of *Luke* than in any of the other three; and his arrangement of the facts is, at the same time, the least probable in itself, and the least reconcilable to that of the rest. This will sufficiently appear by my own observations; but much more evidence of this kind than can well be stated in writing, must, I think, occur to any person who shall read the Gospel of *Luke* with attention, and in comparison with the other Gospels.

With respect to myself, I must acknowledge that the harmony of the Gospels always appeared to me to be a subject of great *curiosity* indeed, and even of much *use* and *importance*; but, at the same time, of so much *difficulty* and *uncertainty*, that I despaired of ever seeing the undertaking accomplished to any purpose; till I met with Mr. Mann's *Dissertations on the Times of the Birth and the Death of Christ*.† Finding in this treatise some fundamental errors

* See *supra*, p. 8, Note †.

† "Of the true Years of the Birth and Death of Christ. Two Chronological Dissertations," 1733. The learned author, Nicholas Mann, was chosen Master of

in all preceding harmonies, rectified, and the general *outline* of a quite new and better harmony laid down, I was led to consider the subject with some attention, and immediately set about the scheme of a harmony on his principles; and, in the prosecution of this work, I was led to depart from his disposition of many particular events; though a variety of additional arguments occurred to me in support of his general hypothesis.

If I should be thought to have succeeded in this work better than the generality of my predecessors, I shall attribute it chiefly to the *mechanical methods* I made use of in the arrangement of it; which were as follow: I procured two printed copies of the Gospels, and having cancelled one side of every sheet, I cut out all the separate histories, &c. in each Gospel; and having a large table appropriated to that use, I placed all the corresponding parts opposite to each other, and in such an order as the comparison of them (which, when they were brought so near together, was exceedingly easy) directed.

In this loose order the whole harmony lay before me a considerable time, in which I kept reviewing it at my leisure, and changing the places of the several parts, till I was as well satisfied with the arrangement of them, as the nature of the case would admit. I then fixed the places of all these separate papers, by pasting them, in the order in which they lay before me, upon different pieces of pasteboard, carefully numbered, and by this means, also, divided into sections.

the Charter-House in 1787, when his competitor was Dr. Conyers Middleton. Mr. Mann had before held, probably for a subsistence, the office of "Wardrobe Keeper at Windsor."

"Dying November 24, 1753," says Mr. Nichols, "he was buried in the piazza at the Charter-House; where, over the chapel door, a tablet is thus inscribed:

"Attende paululum, quisquis es.
Subtus jacet Nicolaus Mann,
Olim Magister, nunc remistus pulvere.
Quis ille vel quid egerit benè aut secùs in vitâ,
Omitte quæritare: scit Deus.
Monere maluit hoc quod ad te pertinet:
Benè universis tu fac et fieri velis,
Semper benigni Patris omnium memor.
Sic si paratus huc intres,
Precibus tuis cælum patebit:
Ipse quum stabis reus die supremâ
Sub tremendo judice ratione vitæ reddita laudaberis."

Nichols's *Lit. Anecd.* 1812, II. pp. 165, 166, *Note* †.

"The tablet," probably inscribed by Mr. Mann himself, "was placed some years before his death—and covered with a black stone, which, after his interment, was removed." *Ibid.* p. 705.

When I had done this, I published *A General View of my Harmony*, with the principal reasons on which it was founded, in the *Theological Repository*, which I then conducted, that my friends, and the public in general, might form a judgment of it. This was in the years 1769 and 1770; and since that time no material objection, that has come to my knowledge, has been made to it. However, preserving my pasteboards, I have reviewed them occasionally, and, as it was still not difficult to do it, have transposed some of the parts to what I have thought to be more convenient places.

I will venture to say, that, by the help of such a mechanical contrivance as this, a person of a very moderate capacity or critical skill, will have an advantage over a person of the greatest genius and comprehension of mind without it. For, by this means, the things to be compared are brought under the eye at the same time, and may be removed from one situation to another without trouble; so that every thing may be viewed, to all possible advantage, in every light, and nothing can escape, perplex, or distract the attention. Whereas, when a person takes the several Gospels as they lie in our printed books, he not only loses *time*, in turning to the parallel passages, and in considering how they will stand in new connexions; but, not being able to carry in his mind all the circumstances that demand his attention at the same time, he will be in great danger of being bewildered, and, consequently, of forming a hasty judgment, on a confused and inadequate view of things. Whether other harmonists have had recourse to any method similar to this of mine, I cannot tell; but from the result of their labours, I am inclined to think that few of them were possessed of such an advantage.

That I might not be biassed by a regard to any particular hypothesis, I resolutely avoided so much as looking into any harmony whatever, till I had nearly pleased myself with my own arrangement; beginning only with Mr. Mann's transposition of the 5th chapter of *John*,* and neglecting even his outline of a harmony. But when I had done this, I

* Mr. Mann says, "that the sixth chapter seems to be transposed from its proper place, and should precede the fifth;" and that "the learned *Petit (Eclog. Chronol. L. i. C. xii.)* has taken notice of this disorder or ὕψιστον πρότερον, as he calls it, in the course of the narration; but believes it to be want of method in the author." Mr. Mann is rather inclined to think "that the two chapters, beginning both with the same words, were anciently misplaced;—from the negligence of those who had the first keeping of St. *John's* writings, or those who copied them." *True Years*, pp. 156, 157, 161. See *Appendix*, No. III.

carefully examined all the *harmonies** that I could meet with, and weighed all the reasons produced by the writers of them, for their disposition of every fact of consequence. The result of this examination will now and then appear in the following *Observations*, though I have made as little parade as possible of this kind of reading.

There is a very great difference in the manner of *disposing* and *printing* the different harmonies of the Gospel, and each of them may have its peculiar use. Mine will also be considerably different from any other that I have seen, and I flatter myself it will not be without its advantages. I have printed in a *larger character* what appears to me to be the most authentic and the most circumstantial account of every important incident, collected from all the Gospels promiscuously, placing the parallel accounts in separate columns, printed in a *smaller character*. By this means, any person who would choose to read *the whole history*, without interruption, may confine himself to the larger character, having recourse to the columns printed in the smaller character only when he has occasion to compare the different accounts of the same thing.

The reasons for my choice of particular histories for the larger character, may not always appear at first sight, but I have generally, all other circumstances being equal, given this preference to the Gospel of *John*, and in the next place to that of *Matthew*, before those of *Mark* and *Luke*. Where an authority in general is of an inferior kind, I have sometimes given this preference to it, when the account has been much fuller and more circumstantial. But more frequently I have followed the best authority as far as it would go, and have taken from the inferior ones whatever was wanting to make it complete. In many cases, however, my choice was nearly balanced, and as the columns are printed, any person may please himself with considering that as the principal account of any discourse or transaction to which he himself shall give the preference.†

* Of which the learned *Jeremiah Jones* gives the following account: "*Tatian*, the scholar of *Justin Martyr*, composed a Harmony in some part of the second century; *Ammonius of Alexandria*, in the beginning of the third; and *Eusebius* in the beginning of the fourth. In the last age great pains was taken in this work, by *Chemnitius*, *Gerhard*, *Calvin*, *Dr. Lightfoot*, and many others. *M. Le Clerc*, *Mr. Whiston* and *Mr. Toinard*, are (I think) the only persons who have done any thing considerable in this matter of late years." *Vindication of St. Matthew's Gospel*, 1719, p. 2.

† For the use of those who will choose to read the Gospels in the *original*, this Harmony will be printed in Greek. But for the sake of common readers, the *Observations*, and the *English Harmony*, accompanied with *Illustrations of the difficult passages*, will be sold without the Greek. (P.) For the *Preface* to the *English Harmony*, see *Appendix*, No. IV.

Observations

ON THE

HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS.



SECTION I.

On the Time of the Birth of Christ.

THE time of the *birth* of Christ is not a subject of much importance, because no other very considerable event is connected with it; but the time of his *death* is of much moment in chronology, as the dates of many other great events depend upon it. Both of them, however, have, from their relation to the history of Christianity, been the objects of laborious investigations by many critics and chronologers.

Without pretending to have taken so much pains with the subject as many others, (though I have carefully attended to what has been advanced by those who have preceded me in this discussion,) I shall briefly recite the sum of the evidence in favour of those dates to which I am inclined to give the preference; which are the year 7 before the commencement of the common Christian æra, U. C. 747, P. J. 4707 for the birth of Christ, and A. D. 29, U. C. 782, P. J. 4742 for the death of Christ.

According to *Luke*, Christ was born at a time when there was a general register or polling (*απογραφη*) of the Jewish nation by the order of Augustus. This the Romans called a *census*, and the *Ancyran* marbles* say, that Augustus took the census of the Romans three times, the first time with his colleague Agrippa, in the year corresponding to 28 B. C., the second in the year 8 B. C., in the consulship of

* *Marmor Ancyranum*, "an ancient marble found," (about 1562,) by *Busbequius*, "in the city of Ancyra," the capital of Galatia, now *Anguri*, of which Augustus was considered as a second founder. This marble has been supposed to contain "great part of a journal of the most memorable actions of his life, which, by his last will, he ordered to be engraved on the pillars of brass which supported the frontispiece of the stately mausoleum which Augustus had built for himself between the Tiber and the Flaminian Way." See *A. U. Hist.* 1748, XIV. pp. 41, 43; *Apthorp's Letters*, 1778, pp. 345, 387; *Gen. Biog. Dict.* 1784, III. p. 51, *Note*.

Censorinus and *Asinius*, as Lipsius and others explain it; and the third time with Tiberius, in the year 14 after Christ.

The second of these censuses being the only one for our present purpose, it is evident that our Lord could not have been born before the year 8 B. C. The last census is evidently out of the question, because, according to *Matthew*, our Lord was born before the death of King Herod.

This census was taken by *Quirinius*, who was afterwards governor of Syria; but at a time when *Sentius Saturninus* was governor of that province.* For this we have the testimony of *Tertullian*, who appeals to the records of the Roman empire. His words are, “Sed et census constat actos sub *Augusto*, tunc in *Judæa* per *Sentium Saturninum*, apud quos genus ejus inquirere potuissent.”† As this *Quirinius* afterwards took another census of Judea, viz. upon the death of Archelaus, Luke distinguishes the two, by calling this the *first census that was taken by this governor*, as Dr. Lardner, with great probability, renders the passage: αὕτη ἡ ἀπογραφὴ πρώτη ἐγένετο ἡγεμονεύοντι τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίῃ. *Luke* ii. 2.‡

As this census was taken at Rome, in the year 8 B. C., it seems probable that it was not taken in the distant provinces till the year 7 B. C. And for this, another reason will be suggested presently.

The birth of Christ could not be *later* than this date, viz. 7 B. C., because, as is inferred from some Syrian coins, produced by Cardinal Noris,§ Varus, who succeeded Saturninus, was governor of Syria the year following.||

It was the general opinion of the Christian fathers, that Christ was born when all the world was at peace, which was the case in the year 8 B. C.; and *Orosius*¶ says, that

* Mr. Mann conjectures, that “both might be governors of *Syria* at the same time, with commissions of a different nature.” He adds, that “the larger provinces under the *Cæsars* had usually two governors at a time, one a senator, if not a consular man, commander of the military forces, with the title of *Proconsul* or *Proprætor*; the other of inferior rank, superintendant of the revenues, with the title of *Procurator Cæsaris*, but not inferior in power, as having often the secret of the court.” *True Years*, p. 48.

† *Against Marcion* (L. iv. C. vii.), *ibid.* pp. 47, 48.

‡ “This first taxing (or enrolment) was made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.” *Works*, I. p. 292. See *Early Opinions*, (in Vol. VII.,) B. iii. Ch. xx. Sect. vi.

§ “In his book *De Epochis Syro-Macedorum*, p. 211.” *Mann*, p. 64.

|| See *Mann's Dissertations*, pp. 64, 65. (P.)

¶ *Paul Orosius*, of Catalonia, a pupil of *St. Augustin* in 414. He wrote in seven books “*Historia adversus Paganos*,” from the beginning of the world to A. D. 316. According to a French biographer, this history, of which there are two editions, (1615 and 1738,) is “plus dogmatique qu’historique, plein d’inexactitudes et de bruits populaires.” See *Nouv. Dict. Hist.* 1772, IV. p. 802.

the temple of Janus continued shut (i. e. that the peace lasted) twelve years. Now *Augustus*, who was proclaimed emperor upon every victory, was proclaimed emperor the fifteenth time, twelve years after this date, so that it is probable that this peace had commenced with that year.*

It is thought probable, from many circumstances,† that the Magi visited Judea in the year 6 B. C.; and as Herod's order for the execution of the infants comprehended those from two years old and under, it may be presumed that this tyrant, in order to make sure of his victim, would take in a year more than was absolutely necessary; and on this account it is more probable that the year 7 B. C. is the true date of the birth of Christ, than the year 8 B. C.

It has been pretty sufficiently proved by Dr. Lardner and *Magnan*, that Herod died in the year 4 before Christ.‡ This is also inferred from the computation of an eclipse of the moon, which *Josephus* says,§ happened in Herod's last illness, and which has been found to have been on the 13th of March in this year. Upon this event, Christ returned from Egypt, and there is a tradition that he stayed there two years; which, allowing for the journey, the visit of the Magi, and other circumstances, almost fixes the date to the year 7 B. C.

Luke says, that when Christ was baptized, he was *about* (ὥσει) *thirty years of age*; but as this is by no means a de-

* See *Magnan*. (P.) "Problema de anno Nativitatis Christi, ubi, occasionem offerente vetere Herodis Antipæ nummo, in nummophylacio Clementis XIV. P. O. M. asservato, demonstratur Christum natum esse anno VIII. ante æram vulgarem, contra veteres omnes et recentiores Chronologos. Auctore P. Dominico Magnan Ordinis Minimorum Presbytero, Philosophiæ Theologiæque Lectore emerito, necnon Academiarum Regio-Metensis ac Etrusco-Cortonensis Socio. *Romæ*, 1772. —*Superiorum Facultate*."

This work, controverting a long-established decision of the Church, was published by authority of the Pope's *Licensor of the Press*, and with most honourable testimonies of approbation from eminent dignitaries of the Papal Court. Such was the liberal policy of *Ganganelli's* too short pontificate. See Vol. X. p. 468, *Note* †.

The passage of *Magnan* to which Dr. Priestley here refers is, I apprehend, the following, adopted from "*Tillemont* ut Tom. I. n. 458.:" "Augustus porro duodecim tantum post annos Imperator XV. appellatus est." *Problema*, p. 30.

† For which see *Mann* and *Magnan*. (P.) See *True Years*, pp. 40—45.

Magnan's third proposition is the following: "Magi, Christum adoraturi, venerunt Hierosolimam, exeunte anno VI. ante æram vulgarem." *Problema*, pp. 235—260.

‡ *Magnan* maintains, at considerable length, his 1st proposition: "Herodes Magnus mortuus est anno IV. ante æram vulgarem." *Ibid.* pp. 40—229. Dr. Lardner is not so decided. Having stated two opinions of Herod's death as having happened "three years and nine months," or "about two years and nine months before the vulgar Christian æra," he adds, "which is the truth, I am not able to determine." *Works*, I. p. 428.

§ *Antiq.* B. xvii. Ch. vi. Sect. iv. (P.) See *Whiston's Note*.

finite expression, it will agree well enough with his baptism falling on the year 28, as he would then be thirty-five.

The *time of the year* in which was the course of *Abia*, of which Zacharias was, affords a *datum* for the time of the conception of John the Baptist, and consequently for the birth of Christ. From the time of David, the priests were divided into twenty-four courses, to attend the service of the temple in their turns, each serving a week at a time. After the return from Babylon, the number of courses was still twenty-four; and the temple being set on fire in the course of *Joiarib*, in the month *Ab*, or August, according to Josephus, Mr. Whiston* computes that the course of *Abia* fell in September. Concluding, therefore, that *John the Baptist* was conceived in the beginning of September, he supposes that our Saviour must have been born about the latter end of October in the year following. For as soon as Elizabeth had conceived, she hid herself five Jewish months, and immediately after that, or in the beginning of the sixth month, the Virgin Mary conceived Christ. This must have been about the end of January, and nine months afterwards, viz. the latter end of October, in the same year, it is most probable that he was born.

SECTION II.

On the Time of the Death of Christ.

THAT Christ died in the year 29, when the two *Gemini* were consuls, is so expressly asserted by several of the ancient fathers, persons who lived nearest to the time of Christ, and who were under no imaginable bias to depart from the truth, that I do not see how it can well be called in question; especially as this date is sufficiently consistent with every other criterion by which it can be determined. I shall briefly recite this evidence chiefly from M. Le Clerc, to whose first dissertation, subjoined to his *Harmony*,† I refer my reader for the words of the originals.

* See his *Harmony*, p. 158. (P.)

† “*Harmonia Evangelica Græco-Latina*.—Accesserunt tres Dissertationes, de annis Christi, deque concordia et auctoritate Evangeliorum,” 1699. This *Harmony*, which Le Clerc describes as a favourite work, he dedicated to Archbishop Sharp, and both appear to have incurred some censures on the occasion. See *J. Clerici Vita et Opera*, 1711, pp. 100—103, 255.

An English translation of the *Harmony* and Dissertations appeared in 1701. (See pp. 576—579.) In the dedication, the author thus happily describes a very natural result of his Christian occupation: “Whilst I was compiling this my *Har-*

Clemens Alexandrinus says, that Christ suffered in the 15th year of Tiberius, forty-two years and three months before the destruction of Jerusalem. Now, Augustus dying in August, A. D. 14, the remainder of that year may be ascribed either to him, or to Tiberius; and therefore the same year may, by different persons, be called the 15th or the 16th of Tiberius.

Julius Africanus also says, that Christ suffered in the 15th year of Tiberius.

Origen evidently had the same opinion with *Clemens Alexandrinus*, as may be inferred from his saying, after him, that Christ was crucified forty-two years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Tertullian is more express; saying, that Christ suffered in the 15th year of Tiberius, Rubellius Geminus, and Fusius Geminus being consuls, before the 7th (in some copies the 10th, in others the 17th) of the calends of April, and in another place after the 10th of the calends of April.

Some of the primitive Christians were so fully persuaded that Christ suffered on the 8th of the calends of April, that is, on the 25th of March, that they would always keep their Easter on that day.* This agreeing with *Tertullian*, leads us to imagine that those Christians, whoever they were, had the same opinion with him concerning the year of the passion.

Lastly, *Sulpicius Severus* says, that Christ suffered when Fusius Geminus and Rubellius Geminus were consuls.

As this evidence stands uncontradicted by any thing in antiquity, I do not see how any person at this day can reasonably object to it.

What may be principally alleged against this date is, that, according to the rules for fixing Easter, the passover will not fall on a Friday for that year. But in this, several things are taken for granted, and especially that the Jews computed precisely as we do, and with the same exactness; neither of which is at all probable. The modern Jews give very different accounts of the custom of those ancient times in this respect, and certainly no exact rule can be deduced from what Josephus or Philo says on this subject.

Josephus says, that the passover was to be kept on the 14th

mony, I was so struck with admiration of the excellent discourses of *Jesus*, so inflamed with love of his most holy doctrine, that methought I but just then began to be acquainted with what I scarce ever laid out of my hands from my infancy."

* See *Walch's* "Explanation of the Decree of the Council of Nice, concerning the Time of keeping Easter." *Novi Commentarii Gottengensis*, l. p. 36. (P.)

day of the month *Nisan*, according to the moon (κατα σελήνην).* But from this nothing can be inferred but that the Jewish year was a *lunar* one; and notwithstanding this, it might be regulated by a very inaccurate cycle.

Philo says, that the feast of passover was “to be kept on the 14th day of *Nisan*, when the moon’s orb would be near to being full”† (μελλόντων τῶν σελήνιακῶ κυκλῶ γενεῖσθαι πλησιζαῖς); but this admits of its being a little before, though perhaps not a little after, the full moon.

Nay it may, I think, be inferred from this writer’s expressing himself in this manner, that the ancient Jewish rule for fixing the time of passover was not what it is now generally supposed to have been, viz. that it was always *on the very day of the full moon*. Had this been their invariable rule, he could never have said that it fell on a day when the moon was only *near* to being full. It is evident from this that the Jews made use of a method which admitted of some latitude in this respect, and how much we cannot tell.

It is even certain, from the facts that may be collected from the controversy concerning the time of keeping Easter in the Christian Church, that the Jews did not observe the equinox; that even the Latins, for several centuries, celebrated Easter in such a manner that the full moon which regulated it was sometimes before the equinox; that the present rule of fixing it, so that it is always *after* the equinox, was only contrived by *Dionysius Alexandrinus* in the third century, after the example of some Jews only; and that the Jews in general were not exact in observing the equinox till the fourth century. ‡

Some have contended that the Jews determined the beginning of every month by the actual observation of the new moon. But this is an opinion that I think has been sufficiently confuted by Mr. Mann. §

* *Antiq. B. iii. Ch. x. Sect. v.*; *Mann*, pp. 195, 196.

† *Ibid.* (P.)

‡ For the proof of these particulars I refer to the dissertation of the learned Mr. Walch above-mentioned, in the *Novi Commentarii Societatis Gottingensis*, p. 10. (P.)

§ See his *Dissertation*, p. 192. (P.) “Many affirm,” says Mr. Mann, “that the Jews before the devastation of *Jerusalem*, always begun their months, only from the first sight and appearance of the moon after its conjunction with the sun. *Petavius* (in *Doct. Temp.* L. ii. C. xxvii.) gives us out of the *Talmud* and *Maimonides*, the method of observing and declaring a new moon: that several men of approved fidelity, watchfulness, and quick sight, were carefully chosen by the *Sanhedrin*, and sent to the highest mountains near *Jerusalem* to watch for the new moon, on the 29th evening after the preceding new moon. If they saw it then, it was presently reported, and declared to be sanctified: if the next day, that month had 30 days: and if the *Sanhedrin* waited all the 30th day in vain, and heard no news of

The oldest writer who has given us any account of the Jewish method of fixing the time of passover is *Epiphanius*; and M. Le Clerc informs us that, according to a cycle composed from this writer, partly by Kepler, and partly by Petavius, the passover of the year 29 fell on the 25th of March, which M. Le Clerc says, was a Thursday. * But Mr. Ferguson's tables † make it to have been a Friday. Otherwise, this computation would, in my opinion, correspond to the account of the Evangelists. Whereas Mr. Mann ‡ and most others, who assign different dates to this event, and observe the present methods of fixing the time of Easter, all suppose the passover of the year of crucifixion to have been on a Friday.

I find, that the full moon of the year 29 B. C. fell on the 18th of March, so that according to the opinion adopted by M. Le Clerc, the passover must have been almost a whole week after the full moon; and though it is impossible to say that the old Jewish cycle was more exact than this, it must be acknowledged not to be very probable. And yet the evidence of *Tertullian*, and those primitive Christians above-mentioned, who kept their *Easter* on the 25th of March, is in favour of the latter of these two weeks, viz. before the 7th of the calends of April, *i. e.* before the 26th of March, and after the 10th of the calends, *i. e.* 23d of March. And a council assembled at Cæsarea, in Palestine, upon the question of keeping Easter, in 195, say that the crucifixion was on the 11th of the calends of April, or the 22d of March. § Now the Friday in that week was on the 25th of March. And though we may presume that, in general, the Jews, as well as other nations, whose year was luni-solar, began their months about the time of new moon, (so that the full moon

the moon, the 31st day was of course the new moon. Upon the resolution of the council, couriers went every way to notify the appointed new moon, to the distance of ten days' journey.

"This short account of the ceremonial of regulating a new moon," continues Mr. Mann, "carries with it so much absurdity, as well as superstition, that it raises our wonder, how this found credit with some judicious writers, who despise many other fables of the same authors; especially since no ancient *Greek* or *Latin* writer is produced to warrant the tale, except one anonymous forger of a piece called the *Preaching of Peter*.—It is added, that some of these moon-couriers went ten days' journey from *Jerusalem*: whither bound, would be hard to say; for the remotest part of the *Jewish* dominions was not 120 miles from *Jerusalem*." *True Years*, pp. 193, 194, 197.

* *Harmony*, 1701, p. 580.

† *Astronomical Tables and Precepts for calculating the true Times for New and Full Moons*, &c. 1763. By James Ferguson, F.R.S." He had published in 1754, "A Brief Description of the Solar System; to which is subjoined, an *Astronomical Account of the Year of our Saviour's Crucifixion*." Mr. Ferguson died in 1776, aged 66.

‡ *True Years*, p. 200.

§ See *Ibid.* p. 205. (P.)

would fall about the 15th day,) it is plain from Reland's *Jewish Antiquities*, * that the Jews did not observe this rule with any strictness; for then their months would always have been alternately of 29 and 30 days. Whereas, according to his account of their calendar, † they had sometimes 8 months of 30 days, with 4 of 29; and sometimes 8 of 29 days, with 4 of 30; or with any intermediate proportion. Now this is inconsistent with their beginning every month with a new moon, and how far they might depart from that rule, one way or the other, we cannot tell.

If, rejecting the rule deduced from *Epiphanius*, we keep to the present rule, which never admits of the passover to have fallen a single day before the equinox, we must carry the passover of this year to the 17th of April, which is expressly contrary to all the evidence of *Tertullian* and of the council.

It is remarkable enough, however, that it is only taking the week before this, in the same month, and the day of full moon itself falls on a Friday. For the 18th of March was on that day of the week, and only two days before the equinox. And who can say that the Jewish cycle might not admit of the passover being fixed so near the equinox as two days before it, as well as some time after it; especially considering that the Jews of those times did not observe the equinox; no purpose of theirs requiring such exactness? For those, therefore, who will have the passover of the week of crucifixion to have fallen on a Friday, I should think this year to be sufficiently for their purpose. They who, with myself, prefer the Thursday, may take the same week, supposing that the 14th day of the month might fall one day before the full moon; which, according to Reland's account of the Jewish calendar, was very possible; and if the Jews had any regard to the benefit of *moonlight*, they would choose a day before the full moon, *viz.* the Thursday in that week, rather than five days after. Inclining to this hypothesis, on account of the full moon falling nearer to the middle of the month, I drew out the Jewish and Roman calendars for the time of Christ's ministry according to it, which was easily done by allowing seven of the Jewish months in that year to have been *defective*, or to have consisted of no more than 29 days; and according to Reland they had sometimes eight such months in the year.

* "*Antiquitates sacrae veterum Hebræorum. Traj. ad Rh. 1708.*"

† *Ibid.* p. 244. (P.)

Accordingly, in that calendar which I have annexed,* I have made the 14th of Nisan in the year 29 to correspond to the 17th of March. But the 14th of Nisan may be made to coincide with the 18th of March (to suit the opinion of those who suppose the passover in the week of crucifixion to have been on a Friday) by only making one less defective month in the year.

Several persons who have endeavoured to fix the time of the death of Christ, have availed themselves of what the Jews observed to our Saviour at the time that he was purging the temple, *viz.* that *it had been 46 years in building*, or, as it may be rendered, that it had been built (*ωκοδομηθη*) 46 years. (*John* ii. 20.) The computations relating to this question have been made so variously, and the facts referred to have so much uncertainty attending them, that I own it affords no sufficient argument for any particular date of the transaction. I shall subjoin, however, what Mr. Whiston says upon the subject, and it will be allowed to have somewhat more weight, as this writer assigns a much later date for the death of Christ than I do, supposing the temple to have been cleansed at a preceding passover.

“Josephus assures us that the *ναος*, or temple, was begun in the eighteenth year of the reign of Herod, (which in such cases he always reckons from the death of Antigonus,) and that it continued for a year and six months, and then was finished. Now from these circumstances we may certainly find the year we inquire for. Antigonus was slain about July, A. P. J. 4677; and so Herod’s eighteenth year must begin about July, 4664, and continue till July, 4695. Let us suppose the temple begun about the feast of tabernacles in this eighteenth year Tisri, 4694. Add a year and six months, the space in which it was building, and it will appear to have been finished at the passover Nisan, 4696. From this passover let us count 46 years, and this will bring us to the passover we inquire for, Nisan 4742, which is A.D. 29.”†

I have carefully considered all Dr. Whitby’s objections‡ to this computation of Mr. Whiston, and think them to be of no weight, especially that on which he lays the greatest stress, *viz.* that the outer buildings were erected before the proper temple (*ναος*) which was built by the priests. I infer from the passage that he himself quotes from *Josephus*, that

* Now reserved for the last volume.

† Whiston’s *Harmony*, p. 144. (P.)

‡ *Paraphrase*, I. p. 497. (P.)

though Herod was eight years in completing the buildings which he superintended, the priests, who began at the same time, finished their part in one year and six months. I am still more surprised that such a critic as Dr. Whitby should say, as a reason why Herod must be supposed to have finished his undertaking first, that “the Jews would not suffer themselves to be deprived of the benefit of their sacrifices for nine years and a half, as they must have done, if the temple of the priests had not been standing, and had not been dedicated till that time ;” when it is evident from *Ezra* iii. 3, that the Jews erected their altar, and sacrificed according to the law, immediately upon their return from the Captivity, in the reign of Cyrus ; though the temple was not built till the reign of Darius. Undoubtedly, therefore, there was no interruption of sacrifices on account of this building of the temple by Herod.

SECTION III.

Of Daniel's Prophecy of Seventy Weeks.

ALMOST all persons, I believe, who have attempted to ascertain the time of the birth, or of the death of Christ, have thought it necessary to make their hypotheses suit with the famous prophecy of Daniel concerning the *seventy weeks*, and I shall not be singular in supposing that their determination in favour of this or that time might be more or less biassed by their interpretation of that prophecy.

For my own part, I can truly say, that I always considered that prophecy as very obscure, on account of the uncertainty both of the *true reading* and of the *interpretation* ; and more especially after I had read the *dissertation* * of the celebrated Mr. Michaelis upon it ; according to which it can be of no use at all for determining the dates above-mentioned. I had, therefore, fixed upon the dates I have supposed for the birth and death of Christ upon *historical considerations* only, without the least regard to this prophecy ; and in this publication I had no design to make any use of it at all, till I met with *Mr. Blayney's Dissertation* † upon that subject. This

* “Of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel.” *Goett.* 1772, *Lond.* 1773.

† “A Dissertation by way of Enquiry into the true Import and Application of the Vision, related Dan. ix. 20, to the end, usually called Daniel's Prophecy of Seventy Weeks ; with occasional Remarks on Michaelis's Letters to Sir John Pringle, on the same Subject.” By Benjamin Blayney, Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford, 1775. Dr. Blayney died in 1801.

I perused with great satisfaction. For, though I still think there are several passages in the prophecy which will admit of farther illustration, and I cannot approve of his version in all respects, this excellent critic appears to me to have thrown great light upon it. He, therefore, drew my attention more particularly to the subject, after I had not only completely settled my plan of the Harmony, but even composed the whole of the preceding section.

In this state of mind, it was certainly natural to endeavour to find such an interpretation of the prophecy as would agree with those dates which historical considerations had induced me to fix upon. As I frankly acknowledge these views, and that I should never have thought of the following interpretation of this famous prophecy, unless I had previously fixed the dates which I suppose to be referred to in it, the reader will make what allowance he thinks proper for this bias.

Mr. Blayney's translation of the whole prophecy is as follows :

“Seventy, seventy years of rest (or desolation) have been upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to check the revolt, and put an end to sins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring again the righteousness of ancient times, and to seal (that is, authenticate) the divine oracle, and the prophet, and to anoint (that is, sanctify anew) the most holy things.

“And thou shalt know and understand, that from the going forth of a decree to rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah the prince, shall be seventy and seven weeks, and threescore and two years ; it shall be rebuilt, still enlarging itself, and becoming more and more considerable, even amidst times of distress.

“And after the times seventy-seven and threescore and two, Messiah shall cut off from belonging to him both the city and the sanctuary ; the prince that shall come shall destroy the people ; and the cutting off thereof shall be with a flood (that is, a hostile invasion) ; and unto the end of a war, carried on with a rapidity, shall be desolations.

“But he shall confirm a covenant (or make a firm covenant) with many for one week ; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and meat-offering to cease ; and the abomination of desolation shall be upon the border ; (that is, encompassing and pressing close upon the city and the temple ;) and an utter end, even a speedy one, (or, even

until an utter end, and that a speedy one,) shall be poured upon the desolated." *

This translation I very much approve in general, but I take the liberty to differ from the excellent author in some parts of it, as well as in his *interpretation* of it.

The capital advantage of Mr. Blayney's interpretation consists in his supposing that the first part of the Angel's address to *Daniel* referred to the seventy years' captivity, and that they are not any part of the prophecy, as all other interpreters have imagined. But for this purpose he had no occasion to make the word נחת a substantive, and translate it *rest*, for which he has by no means, as I think, advanced sufficient reasons. It appears to me more natural to translate that word as it is done in our version, and most of the ancient ones, *viz. determined*, or *marked out*. But the *sense* that Mr. Blayney affixes to this clause is sufficiently justified by a regard to the subject of *Daniel's* prayer and anxiety which preceded this remarkable vision.

Daniel says, (*Chap. ix. 2.*) that in the year in which he had this vision, which was *the first of Darius the Mede*, he had *understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem*; and after a confession of the sins of his people, he intreats, (*vers. 16, 17.*) that God would *turn away his fury from the city Jerusalem*, and that he would *cause his face to shine upon the sanctuary which was desolate*. Whilst he was yet speaking the angel accosts him; and referring, with the greatest propriety, to the subject of his prayer, informs him that the seventy years' desolation of Jerusalem, which had been the subject of his thoughts, must be fulfilled, to punish his people for their sins, to bring them back to the piety of their ancestors, and to verify the prophecy of *Jeremiah*; and till that period, which was absolutely determined in the decree of God, the sanctuary must continue to lie desolate: but that from that period other more favourable events, the subject of the ensuing prophecy, would take place.

In his interpretation, Mr. Blayney supposes the seventy years of rest, or desolation, to have been past about the time of the vision, *viz. 536 B.C.* and from that year, which was the same in which the Babylonian empire was overthrown by *Cyrus*, he dates the seventy-seven weeks, or 539 years to

* *Dissert. p. 67. (P.)* See Vol. XII. pp. 331—334.

the birth of Christ : for thus he interprets the expression, *to Messiah the prince*. He places this event four years before the Christian æra, and from this he dates the 62 years, to terminate at the commencement of the Jewish war in 66, or the second coming of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem. And in the middle of the last week of this period, or between the years 66 and 73, the daily sacrifice ceased in the temple, a little before the final destruction of it.

To prepare the way for my interpretation, I would beg leave to divide the sentence in the second paragraph of Mr. Blayney's translation in a manner different from his ; but I flatter myself that, independent of any particular interpretation, it will be thought more natural, especially as it gives a date to an event mentioned immediately afterwards, which, according to Mr. Blayney, has no date at all. Instead therefore of reading as he does, that "from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah the prince shall be seventy and seven weeks and threescore and two years," I would connect this latter term of years with the following sentence ; reading thus, *and in threescore and two years it shall be rebuilt, &c.* As to the insertion of the particle *in* before a noun of number, I think it requires no apology, as in all languages particles of that import are frequently understood.

Farther, it appears to me that the mere *birth* of Christ, which produced no change in the face of the world, was not of itself of sufficient consequence to be announced, in this prophecy, in the manner that Mr. Blayney (and, indeed, almost every other interpreter) supposes. I therefore think that the period distinguished in this very particular manner, *unto the Messiah the prince*, refers to our Lord's entering upon his office of *public instructor*, the time in which his *divine commission* and *princely power*, his appearing *in the form of God*, and especially his being *declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead*, actually took place. This was a period respecting the *Messiah* which was certainly distinguished in the annals of Providence in the most illustrious manner ; being, without all dispute, the most important period from the beginning of the world to the final consummation of all things.

Now from this most remarkable year 29, there were exactly 77 weeks of years, or 539 years, to the year 510 B.C. in which, and not before, by the order of *Darius Hystaspes*, the decree of *Cyrus*, empowering the Jews to return to their country and rebuild the temple, was actually executed. This therefore appears to me to be a more important æra in

the Jewish history than that of the decree of *Cyrus*. Under *Cyrus* there was a mere order, but under Darius the same order renewed, attended with sufficient power to carry it into execution.

Besides, it is to be observed, that the prophecy leaves us at liberty to fix upon *any decree* that was made for this purpose, and therefore Mr. Blayney, with great propriety, renders it, *and from a decree*.

That the term of the 70 years' captivity was expired at the time of the vision, as Mr. Blayney's translation implies, cannot be strictly true; for the Jews were then at Babylon, and there was not even a decree in their favour till the reign of *Cyrus*, which succeeded that of *Darius the Mede*, in the very first year of which was this vision. There is, therefore, on this account, a peculiar propriety in the old translation of the word נחתך *are determined* or decreed, and therefore must have their accomplishment.

I also see no necessity to suppose that the words *restore* and *rebuild*, should be understood literally of the rebuilding the walls of the town, but figuratively, as they are frequently applied, meaning the restoration of the civil polity of the Jewish nation. Besides, the words may be applied to the actual building of the *temple* at Jerusalem, which was accomplished under *Darius Hystaspes* only; and this was an event of much more importance than the walls of the city; and from this building of the temple, the *passover*, which was the most important of all the Jewish feasts, and the rule for all the rest, began to be celebrated, after the interruption occasioned by the Babylonish Captivity.*

It may also be said, that, in computing the proper time of the return of the Jews from the Babylonish Captivity, some account ought to be taken of the second return under *Ezra*, in the seventh year of *Artaxerxes*, that is, in 458, or rather 448 B.C.; and if so, the mean date of the return will fall somewhere between the return under *Cyrus* and that under *Artaxerxes*, and therefore may conveniently enough be fixed for the reign of *Darius*.

It is worthy of particular consideration, that, according to the tenor of this famous prophecy, the commencement of the period of seventy-seven weeks coincides with the expiration of the lesser period of seventy years of desolation; and if these commence, as any person would naturally imagine, at the destruction of Jerusalem by *Nebuchadnezzar*, when

* See *Ezra* vi. 9. (*P.*)

only an end was put to the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jews, the termination falls precisely on the date of the edict of *Darius*, the former happening in the year 580 B.C., and the latter in the year 510.

To date the commencement of the seventy years' captivity from the reign of Jehoiakim, when it took place only very partially, and when the temple was standing, all the forms of the Jewish religion kept up, and Jewish kings reigning in Jerusalem several years after, appears to me to have been adopted too hastily by most, if not all commentators who have written on the subject, from not attending to any other date for the expiration of these seventy years than the mere decree of *Cyrus*.

I date the seventy years' captivity from the commencement of the siege of Jerusalem, when the calamities of the Jewish nation began, and not from the actual destruction of it, which was two years afterwards; but this appears to me sufficiently near the truth, and as the prophecy is delivered in whole numbers, it cannot but be deemed quite sufficient that the completion terminate at the nearest whole number. Indeed no commentators think themselves absolutely bound to greater exactness.

Besides, the building of the temple was not actually completed, and the edifice dedicated, till the seventh year of *Darius*, or 505 B.C.; so that, taking the middle between these two terms, from 510, when the building was commenced, to 505, *viz.* 507½ B.C. for the building of the temple, we may date the seventy years' captivity from the actual demolition of the temple, and the final destruction of Jerusalem.

That the seventy years' *captivity*, as it is generally called, or more properly, the seventy years' *desolation of Jerusalem*, and more especially of the temple, did not expire till the reign of *Darius Hystaspes*, may, I think, with certainty be inferred from *Zechariah* i. 12. This prophet had a vision (an account of which is given in this chapter) in the second year of *Darius*, the very year in which his decree to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem was made; and in this vision an angel of the Lord is represented as saying, "*O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?*" I cannot help thinking this to be decisive in favour of the seventy years' captivity, or desolation, having terminated in the reign of *Darius Hystaspes*, and consequently of their having commenced at

the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; and therefore, that it is from the decree of Darius that we are to date whatever is foretold in this famous prophecy of Daniel.

In the preceding computation I suppose an error of ten years in the time allotted by all chronologers to the reign of *Xerxes*. But this I think has been sufficiently proved by Mr. Lauchlan Taylor, in his *Essay on the Revelation*,* *viz.* that in reality, he did not reign more than eleven years, though the canon of Ptolemy gives him twenty-one. This appears to me to be a discovery of so much consequence in chronology, and especially for the interpretation of prophecy, that I shall subjoin all that he has said upon this subject in a distinct Section; and I am the more induced to do this, as I believe Mr. Taylor's book is not much known in England.

I also think there is a pretty plausible ground for dating the 62 years, after which the city should be rebuilt, from the decree of Darius in 510 B.C., when I find, in *Prideaux's* tables, that from this time to the actual rebuilding of the city under Nehemiah in 445 B.C., there are 65 years (allowing for the error above-mentioned in the intervening reign of *Xerxes*), and assuming the middle date for the rebuilding of the temple above-mentioned, this period will be exactly 62 years; the difference at least not exceeding half a year.

Instead of supposing, with Mr. Blayney, and most others, that the time when the *Messiah* should cut off the city and sanctuary is to be dated from the *commencement* of the Jewish war, in the year 66, I suppose the *completion* of it to be intended in the prophecy, or the year 73; and it is remarkable enough, that from the time of this vision, in the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede, (which immediately succeeded the taking of Babylon by the Medes and Persians,) and which corresponds to the year 538, or with the correction above-mentioned, 528 B.C., to this date were exactly 77 weeks of years, and 62 single years, or 601 years. And it is observable, that in this part of the prophecy these periods of years, which are repeated from the preceding part of the prophecy, are not said to commence from the *æra* of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem: it is only said that *after*

* "An Essay on some important Passages of the Revelation of the Apostle John, compared with corresponding Passages in Daniel, in which a new Explication is given of some Passages in that Book, and applied to the Circumstances of the present Time." By Lauchlan Taylor, A.M. (Minister of Larbert, N. B.) London, 1762, *Edin.* 1770.

the times 77 and 62, Messiah shall cut off, &c. These two periods, and not a different one, comprehending them both, was probably made use of for the easier recollection of them, on account of the same numbers having been used just before, though commencing from a different date.

The last week I make to be the very same with Mr. Blayney, supposing the termination of it to be in the year 73, and that in the middle of this week the Messiah did actually cause the sacrifice and meat-offering to cease, by the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem.

For greater distinctness, I shall subjoin a short paraphrase of this prophecy, with my interpretation intermixed with it.

Seventy, I say, seventy years of desolation, commencing at the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and ending at the rebuilding of the temple under Darius, are decreed upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to check the revolt, to bring again the righteousness of ancient times, and to fulfil the prophecy of Jeremiah. Till this period be expired, the sanctuary must continue to lie desolate.

And thou shalt know and understand, that from the going forth of this decree of Darius to restore Jerusalem, unto the time that the *Messiah* shall appear in his princely power, with his commission from God, to preach the glad-tidings of the gospel, shall be 77 weeks of years, or 539 years; but that after threescore and two years from the same decree, the city itself shall be actually rebuilt, with its walls and gates; and it shall enlarge itself; and become more and more considerable even amidst times of distress.

Also, after the same periods of years which have been just mentioned, *viz.* 77 weeks of years, and 62 single years, in all 601 years reckoned from the present time, *Messiah*, who on his first appearance will be rejected by the Jews, shall reject them from being his people, and shall have completely cut off both the city and the sanctuary. And the Romans whom he shall employ to execute his just vengeance, shall destroy the people, and this destruction shall be most rapid and complete.

In the last week of this whole term, or the last seven years, preceding the year 73, the Messiah shall confirm a covenant with many; numbers adhering to his cause, and being rescued by him from impending destruction. And in the midst of this dreadful week, that is, in the year 70, he shall cause the sacrifice and meat-offering to cease, in the utter destruction of the temple and the city; the abomina-

tion of desolation shall be in the temple itself, and an utter and speedy end will be put to the whole of the Jewish constitution. *

New as this interpretation is, in almost all its parts, I hope that, in a speculation of so much difficulty, the reader will not reject it on that account. Since the conjectures of learned men relating to this remarkable prophecy have been so very different, there is certainly less reason for attaching ourselves to any one of them, and more reason for giving due attention to others. †

SECTION IV.

Mr. Lauchlan Taylor's Observations concerning the Length of the Reign of Xerxes, from his Essay on some Passages in the Revelation, &c. p. 191, &c.

“THERE are considerable differences among chronologers concerning the length of the reign of Xerxes. Diodorus, and the chronologers who have followed him, affirming that Xerxes reigned twenty years before the reign of his son Artaxerxes commenced; whereas Petavius hath offered a proof, from the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides, that Artaxerxes began his reign in the twelfth year of the reign of his father Xerxes, he having been (as he supposes) then admitted by him into an equal share of the government with himself. The authorities upon which Petavius grounds his opinion are, beyond all question, superior to that of Diodo-

* See *Michaelis* on this part of the prophecy. (P.)

† The reader will please to take notice that, in the preceding computations, I have made use of *Prideaux's* chronological tables, subjoined to his *Connexion*, than which nothing can be more unexceptionable. For yet greater distinctness, I shall subjoin a chronological table of all the dates referred to in the preceding interpretation (corrected by deducting ten years from the reign of Xerxes) and a view of all the periods.

	B.C.			
Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem	580	70 years captivity	77 weeks, or 535 years	77 weeks & 62 years, or 601 years. (P.)
He destroys the city and temple	578			
The commencement of the empire of Darius the Mede, in the year of the vision	528			
The building of the temple resumed by order of Darius Hystaspes	510			
The middle term between the commencement and finishing of it.	507	62 years	a week, or 7 years	
Nehemiah rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem by order of Artaxerxes	445			
	A.D.			
The year of Christ's death	29			
The commencement of the Jewish war	66			
The destruction of the temple in the middle of the war between 66 and 73	70			
The termination of the war	73			

rus in point of antiquity ; as both the above-mentioned historians wrote not long after the period in question. Let us therefore examine their writings with the utmost accuracy, that we may see what light these ancient authors throw upon the subject.

“ Herodotus, who was born in the reign of Xerxes, relates, (Lib. vii. C. xx.) that, in the beginning of the fifth year of his reign, Xerxes entered upon his Grecian expedition, by marching his numerous armies towards Sardis, and that he took up his winter quarters there. Consequently, his passage over the Hellespont, which happened the spring following, and the defeat of his navy at Salamis by Themistocles, in October following, must have been in the sixth year of his reign ; and the defeat of his army under the command of Mardonius, by the Lacedemonians and Athenians at the battle of Plataea, (which, according to all historians, happened in the September following,) must have been in the seventh year of his reign. The year following, *viz.* the eighth of Xerxes, Thucydides tells us (Lib. i. Sect. xciv.), that the Grecian fleet under the command of Pausanias the Lacedemonian, invaded Cyprus, and overthrew many cities ; that after this expedition, Pausanias besieged and took Byzantium ; (which must have happened the year after the expedition against Cyprus, and in the ninth year of Xerxes ;) that immediately after this success, he entered upon a treasonable correspondence with Xerxes ; and having for some time behaved very haughtily, the confederates accused him of affecting a princely dominion ; that upon this he was recalled by the Spartans ; and, though he was absolved from the crime of treason, yet, that the Spartans would not restore him to his former command, but allowed it to be given by the confederates to the Athenian generals. This must have happened in the 10th year of Xerxes. He then relates, that although Pausanias was not intrusted with any public command ; yet, that he might be in a condition to effect his treasonable designs, he set out in an armed ship for Byzantium ; but, being driven from thence by the Athenians, he fixed his residence about Troy : that the Spartans receiving intelligence of his treasonable machinations there, sent one of their officers to bring him home ; and that, some time after his return, his treachery being fully proved, he was starved to death. This (it is highly probable) happened in the eleventh year of Xerxes’s reign. Immediately after the discovery of the treasonable practices of Pausanias, and his death, the Spartans (as Thucydides relates) accused Themis-

toeoles of being one of his associates, and offered a proof thereof; and that Themistocles, not choosing to stand a trial, fled, first to Coreyra, afterwards to the king of the Molossi, and last of all to Ephesus, where, he tells us, Themistocles wrote a petition to the king of Persia, (whom Thucydides expressly calls Artaxerxes,) and who, as he says, began his reign a very little before that time; and consequently the above accusation against Themistocles, and the greatest part of the time which he spent in his flight, appears to have happened in the eleventh and last year of Xerxes's reign, and the first year of the reign of Artaxerxes.

“Petavius was of opinion, that, after this period, Xerxes reigned for several years jointly with his son Artaxerxes. But, though it must be allowed that sometimes the Babylonian and Persian kings did admit their sons into an equal share of the government with themselves, yet this seems only to have been the case, when the father had been the first king of his family, or when, through the infirmities of old age, they found themselves incapable to conduct the affairs of government without a partner. Thus Nabopolassar, in his old age, admitted his son Nebuchadnezzar to the throne, before his death; and also Darius, in the decline of life, admitted his son Xerxes to the same honour, that the succession in their posterity might continue without opposition, especially as the fathers themselves had been the first kings of their families. But, since the succession had been established in the person of Xerxes, there appears to have been no reason for suspecting that it would be questioned with respect to his son Artaxerxes; and it is evident that Xerxes was not old in the eleventh year of his reign, as he was born after his father ascended the throne. The learned Petavius (as I formerly observed) is of opinion that the flight of Themistocles happened in the twelfth year of Xerxes's reign; and that he might reconcile the history of Thucydides with the annals of Diodorus, (who makes Xerxes to have reigned only one year with his father, and twenty without a partner,) he supposes that Artaxerxes had been raised to the throne by his father several years before his father's death.

“It is indeed universally agreed that Xerxes was advanced by his father Darius to an equal share of the government with himself; but the time when this happened is not certain; and this is not much to be wondered at, since it is generally acknowledged, that the first Grecian histories were written in the reign of Darius, and consequently, these

being composed in an age only emerging from ignorance and fable, must have been very imperfect. It is rather more probable, as Darius was much advanced in life before his Scythian expedition, that, prior to his entering upon it, he raised his son Xerxes to the throne, that he might maintain the government during his absence, and that, whatever calamities might befall him in that dangerous war, at such a distance from his dominions, he might secure the regal power to his descendants. His Scythian expedition was finished some time before the battle of Marathon, which was fought five years before the death of Darius, according to Herodotus; we may therefore suppose, for the above reasons, that Xerxes began to reign nine years before his father's death, and these added to his twelve years' reign without a partner will make his whole reign to have been twenty-one years, which (supposing them to have been marked in the public registers of the empire) might have occasioned the mistake of Diodorus. But, whatever there may be in this, yet, as Diodorus lived four hundred years after Thucydides, we ought, in all reason, to prefer the authority of the last-mentioned writer, who, as Cornelius Nepos observes, lived the nearest to Themistocles of all those who have wrote the history of these times, and was also of the same city. And it is very observable he not only declares that, after Themistocles fled to Ephesus, he sent a petition to Artaxerxes; but, in that petition he claimed the merit of signal services which he had done to Xerxes after his defeat at Salamis, without making any appeal to Xerxes himself, which he certainly would have done if Xerxes had been alive, and possessed of an equal share of the government with his son. I know, that the annals of the Athenian Archons, in the Oxford marbles, and those of others, make a much longer time from the defeat of Xerxes to the flight of Themistocles; but, as they have been found incorrect in several instances, even by their greatest admirers, so none of these authors can be ranked with Thucydides either in respect of accuracy or antiquity.

“That Xerxes reigned only eleven years, and that the flight of Themistocles happened, mostly, in the first year of Artaxerxes, will also be confirmed by the following observations:

“1st. As it is clear from the above, that the battle of Platea was fought in the seventh year of Xerxes, so Thucydides relates, that, after this defeat of the Medes at Platea, and afterwards in a sea-fight at Mycale, the Athenians (whose city had been destroyed before the battle, and who

had betaken themselves to their ships) proceeded to the siege of Sestos ; and, having taken that city, they passed the winter there ; and that next summer they left the Hellespont, and, having brought with them their household furniture and goods, which they had conveyed to the neighbouring islands, when they were obliged to leave the city, they began a-new to rebuild their houses ; and by the instigation, and under the conduct of Themistocles, in opposition to the remonstrances of the Spartans, to rebuild the walls of Athens, and to enlarge and fortify their naval harbour at the Pyræum ; which (although Thucydides says they were not long in finishing them) must have taken up probably more than two years. This brings us to the tenth year of Xerxes's reign, when, we observed formerly, Pausanias was deprived of the command of the allied fleet, and it was given to the Athenians.

“ *2dly.* Thucydides relates, that the command of the fleet being given by the confederates to the Athenians, in order that they might prosecute the war more successfully against the Persians, they enacted, with the consent of their allies, that a tax should be paid by them ; and Plutarch affirms, that Themistocles was employed to levy these taxes, and that he used force and great severity in executing that office. This, it would appear, happened in the tenth year of the reign of Xerxes.

“ *3dly.* Plutarch further observes, that the great power which Themistocles had acquired, and the great severity which he had used, provoked the jealousy of his countrymen and the ill-will of their allies to such a degree, that he was banished Athens, which must have happened a little before Pausanias was brought a second time to trial by the Spartans. And as it appears from Thucydides, that this trial of Pausanias continued a long time, we must conceive that it took up the greatest part, if not the whole, of the eleventh year of the reign of Xerxes. Thucydides also affirms that, immediately after the trial and death of Pausanias, Themistocles was accused by the Lacedæmonians, and that he saved himself from their persecutions by a long and dangerous flight.

“ The latter part of the above computation is confirmed by what Thucydides observes, (Lib. i. Sect. xcvi. xcvi.) that after the Athenians had received from their confederates proper supplies for the equipment and maintenance of their fleets and armies (which happened, according to the above, in the tenth year of Xerxes), the only two naval expeditions of any

consequence, in which they were engaged before the flight of Themistocles, were that against the Carystians in Eubœa, whom, after several engagements, they brought to terms, and that against Naxos, in which they were employed when Themistocles was making his escape to Ephesus. The first of these expeditions must have occupied them during the eleventh year of Xerxes's reign ; especially if we consider, that, immediately before this expedition, they had been engaged in plundering the island of Scyros, transporting the inhabitants, and in planting it with a colony of their own people. And Thucydides relates, that, when Themistocles, in his voyage to Ephesus, came in sight of the Athenian camp in the island of Naxos, he was greatly terrified, lest he should have fallen into their hands. Now, since it is evident that, at this time, the Athenians and their confederates had not conquered that small island of Naxos, (which was at no great distance from them,) we must conceive that it was either in the spring, or early in the summer, that Themistocles sailed by their fleet, and that he arrived at Ephesus some time before the end of the month of August, or the first day of the month Thoth ; and as Thucydides affirms that Themistocles, upon his arrival at Ephesus, sent a letter to the king of Persia ; so he expressly calls this prince *Artaxerxes*, who, he says, was the son of Xerxes, and had newly begun to reign. His words are, *νεωσι βασιλευοντα*. Lib. i. Sect. cxxxvii.

“ From all these things put together, it is most probable, that Themistocles sent his letter before the month Thoth ; and consequently, that Artaxerxes had begun his reign some time before that period. Now, as it is well known that the Chaldean and Egyptian astronomers counted the reigns of their kings from the month Thoth ; and that when any prince began his reign, although it had been only a few days before that month began, yet these were accounted by them as the first year of his reign, and that when the month Thoth was commenced, it was reckoned by them as the beginning of the second year of his reign ; so we have reason to conclude, from every view of the above-mentioned facts, that Xerxes reigned only eleven complete years, and that, according to the chronology of the Egyptians and Chaldeans, the most part of that time which was taken up by Themistocles in flying from place to place, to avoid the persecutions of his enemies, is not to be referred to the last year of the reign of Xerxes, but to the first year of the reign of his son Artaxerxes.”

SECTION V.

Additional Arguments in Support of the Opinion that Xerxes reigned only Eleven Years, and not Twenty-one.

To what Mr. Taylor has advanced in support of his opinion that *Xerxes* reigned only eleven years, and against *Artaxerxes* having been associated in the empire with him during the ten last years of his reign, according to *Petavius*, I would add,

First, that it appears from the history of Persia, at the death of Xerxes, who was assassinated by Artabanus, that Artaxerxes was at that time but a *youth*; so that if he had been associated with his father in the empire ten years before his death, he must have been a mere *child*; and yet, according to Thucydides, it was to Artaxerxes, and not to Xerxes, that Themistocles was introduced, at the very beginning of those ten years.

Secondly, Artaxerxes was only the *third* son of Xerxes, so that if any of the sons had been made associate in the empire along with the father, there is no reason to think that the preference would have been given to him, rather than to one of his elder brothers, and especially to Darius, who was the eldest. But, indeed, no ancient historian makes the least mention of any of the sons of Xerxes having been associated with him in the empire.

Thirdly, we find nothing said concerning Xerxes, from the time of his return from the Grecian expedition to the time of his death. Or, if his name be mentioned, it is only as the king of Persia, by later historians, who took it for granted that he was then upon the throne.

Fourthly, the opinion that Xerxes reigned only eleven years, and not twenty-one, and yet that no addition is to be made to the reign of Artaxerxes on that account, appears to me to be favoured by the computation of the eclipses of the sun which are said to have happened in the course of his reign.

Herodotus says, that in the beginning of the spring, (*αμα τω εαρι*,) when Xerxes was sailing from Sardis, where he had wintered on his expedition into Greece, *the sun, leaving his place in the heavens, became invisible*, (*αφανης εγενετο*,) *when there were no clouds, and the sky was perfectly serene*;

so that from being day it became night.* This event terrified Xerxes very much; but his fears were allayed by his soothsayers, who told him that the sun represented the states of Greece, which were going to be obscured, whereas Persia was denoted by the moon.

The same writer says, that as soon as the people of Peloponnesus heard of the death of Leonidas at Thermopylæ, a great force, from all their cities, went in haste, under the command of Cleombrotus, to the Isthmus, which they fortified with a wall, as quickly as possible, working day and night, the Olympia and Carneia being then over.† He also says, that when the consultation was held in consequence of the offers made to the Athenians by Mardonius, the Lacedæmonians were celebrating the *Hyacinthia*, which was in the month *Hecatombæon*, in the year following, and that they had nearly completed that wall; for they were then building the turrets (επαλξεις).‡

During that festival, the Lacedæmonians sent Pausanias, the son of Cleombrotus, with an army out of the Peloponnesus, Cleombrotus having died not long after he had brought away those who were building the wall on the Isthmus; and he had brought them away because when he was sacrificing on account of the Persian war, *the sun was darkened*, (ὁ ἥλιος ημαυρωθη,) which, I believe, is generally supposed to mean that this luminary was then *eclipsed*. This eclipse, therefore, if it was one, happened some time between the middle of *Metagitnion* of one year, and the *Hecatombæon* of the year following, or between the beginning of September and the end of June. It evidently happened between the battle of Salamis and that of Platea, the former of which, *Petavius* says, was upon the 20th of *Boedromion*, answering to the 23d of our September, § and the latter on the third Boedromion, in the year following. ||

* *Hist.* L. vii. C. xxxvii. (P.)

† *Ibid.* L. viii. C. vii. The *Olympic Games* began on the 11th, and ended on the 15th day of *Hecatombæon*, the first month of the Grecian year, which began with the first new moon after the summer solstice; and the *Carnea* began on the 13th day of the month *Carneus*, answering to *Metagitnion*, the second month in the Grecian year, and lasted 9 days. This, therefore, was about the beginning of September. (P.)

‡ *Hist.* L. ix. C. vi. (P.)

§ Sir Isaac Newton says, (*Observations on Daniel*, p. 142,) that "the battle at Salamis" was "in autumn, on the 16th day of the month *Munyehion*;" but in this he must have been mistaken; for then it would have been about the beginning of April. The same thing is repeated by him in his *Chronology*, (p. 356,) where he says, the eclipse that followed was "of the moon." It ought to have been of the sun. (P.)

|| *Rationarium Temporis*, p. 87. (P.)

I have carefully examined all the eclipses for all the years that are usually ascribed to the reign of Xerxes, by the help of Mr. Ferguson's tables,* the ingenious author himself being so obliging as to give me his assistance in this work ; and I find no total eclipse of the sun, visible at Sardis in that whole period ; so that *Herodotus's* account of the former of the eclipses above-mentioned must be exaggerated. But I do find an eclipse of the sun, of about five digits, visible at Sardis on the 20th of March in the year 470 B. C., in which year he must have left Sardis upon the supposition of his having reigned only 11 years. The greatest obscuration was at 11 minutes past five in the afternoon. Now, this being in the spring of the year, and about the time that so great an armament as that of Xerxes may be supposed to have been in motion, appears to me to make it very probable that the year 470 B. C. was the very year of the expedition.

I do not, indeed, find any eclipse of the sun visible at the Isthmus within the limits marked out for the second of the eclipses mentioned above ; but I think it very possible that Herodotus, by the expression above-mentioned, might not intend an eclipse. He only says, that *the sun was darkened* ; and considering how ignorant and superstitious the Lacedemonians were, above all the other people of Greece, it is very possible that Cleombrotus and his army would be sufficiently alarmed, if, when they were sacrificing on so very interesting an occasion, thick clouds should have arisen pretty suddenly, and have obscured the sun. This is the sum of the evidence from eclipses, in favour of the expedition from Sardis having been in the year 470 B. C.

They who give Xerxes a reign of 21 years, suppose that this expedition was in 480 B. C. ; but there was no eclipse of the sun visible at Sardis that year, though there was an eclipse of about 6 digits visible at the Isthmus on the 2d of October of the same year, which was a little after the time of the battle of Salamis, and therefore sufficiently within the limits above-mentioned ; and for this reason Sir Isaac Newton has pitched upon the year 480 B. C. for that event ; saying that, by calculation, this eclipse fell on the 2nd of October.†

There was a small eclipse of the sun, visible at Sardis on the 20th of April, 481 B. C., but this could hardly be said

* See *supra*, p. 25, Note †.

† *Observations on Daniel*, p. 142. (P.) See *supra*, p. 43.

to be *early in the spring* in that warm climate, it being in the time of harvest; and the hypothesis of this having been the year of that expedition, is not helped by the computation of the eclipse at the Isthmus in 480 B. C.; because this eclipse would be much too late, being within a very few days of the time of the battle of Platea; whereas that eclipse, if it was an eclipse, was evidently over at the time of the consultation above-mentioned, before the Grecian army had left Peloponnesus.

Those who, with Sir Isaac Newton, adopt the chronology of *Ptolemy*, as confirmed by the eclipses which he represents as observed in certain years of the reign of *Cambyses* and *Darius*, are not at liberty to avail themselves of the eclipse in 481, as fixing the time of *Xerxes's* expedition: for the whole series of eclipses fixes that expedition to the year 480 B. C. and no other, and will no more admit of its having been in 481 B. C. than in 470 B. C.

The same may be said concerning another eclipse of the sun, visible at Sardis on the 17th of February, 478 B. C., which Kepler thought to be the eclipse described by *Herodotus*, and to have happened when he was at Sardis the second time, viz. on his return from Greece; and which, in Mr. Costard's* opinion, fixes the expedition to the year 478; saying, that at Smyrna this eclipse was of $11\frac{1}{2}$ digits. But, computing by Mr. Ferguson's tables,† (which, by comparing a computation of the eclipse of 470 made by these tables, with another made in the most exact manner by Mr. Reuben Burrow, I find to be sufficiently exact for these purposes,) I find that this eclipse must have been a very inconsiderable one, the moon having, at that time, too

* "George Costard, a clergyman of the Church of England, and author of several learned works, was born about the year 1710," and died in 1782. Dr. Priestley here, I apprehend, refers to a work published by Mr. Costard in 1764, entitled, "The Use of Astronomy in History and Chronology, exemplified in an Inquiry into the Fall of the Stone into the Ægospotamos, said to be foretold by Anaxagoras; in which it is attempted to be shewn that Anaxagoras did not foretell the Fall of that Stone, but the Solar Eclipse in the First Year of the Peloponnesian War: that what he saw was a Comet, at the Time of the Battle of Salamis: and that this Battle was probably fought, the Year before Christ, 478; or Two Years later than it is commonly fixed by Chronologers." See *Biog. Brit.* IV. pp. 289—294.

† [See *supra*, p. 44.] To those who have occasion to examine ancient eclipses, I would recommend the use of Mr. Ferguson's *New Rotula*, by the help of which a person may see, in a very short time, all the eclipses of any year whatever, so as to form a pretty good judgment whether they will answer his purpose or not. And in a very few hours, any of them may be computed and projected with sufficient exactness by the tables and precepts in his treatise of Astronomy. I cannot express how much satisfaction I have had in the use of them upon this occasion. (P.)

much northern latitude to occasion a considerable eclipse in any place.

Upon the whole, I think it very probable, from this evidence, that the expedition of *Xerxes* was in the year 470 B. C. ; when there was a real eclipse of the sun visible at Sardis, which *Herodotus* describes in terms that cannot possibly admit of any other interpretation, and at the very *time* of the year in which he represents it to have happened, though the *quantity* of the eclipse does not answer to his description of it. Whereas, with respect to the year 480 B. C., it is by no means certain that *Herodotus* mentions any eclipse visible at the Isthmus, in the passage in which he has been supposed to speak of one, and there was no eclipse in that year at Sardis, where he certainly does describe one.

If my deductions from this eclipse, concurring with Mr. Taylor's historical observations, be just, we must take ten years from the whole period of time preceding the reign of *Xerxes* ; and I do not know of any historical or astronomical reason to the contrary.

Before this eclipse described by *Herodotus*, I find no mention of any other eclipse, certainly connected with any historical event, besides that which appeared during the battle between the *Lydians* and *Medes*, on the banks of the river *Halys*, in the reign of *Cyaxares*. But this was so remote from that which was seen in the reign of *Xerxes*, and the intermediate events are so little known, that neither of them can be of the least use in fixing the other.

Besides these, there are six eclipses of the moon mentioned by *Ptolemy*, as having been visible at *Babylon* in certain years of the *Nabonassarian* æra, viz. 257, 246, 225, 127, 28, and 27. To these dates he has also connected certain years of the *Persian* and *Babylonian* kings, making 257, of the *Nabonassarian* æra correspond to 31 of *Darius Hystaspes* ; 246 to 20 of the same prince, &c. And because it is found by computation, that there were eclipses of the moon visible at *Babylon* in those years of the *Nabonassarian* æra, it is taken for granted by *Sir Isaac Newton*, *Prideaux*, and, I believe, all chronologers without exception, that *Ptolemy's* catalogue of kings is confirmed by eclipses, and therefore cannot be disputed.

But it appears to me that this foundation of *Ptolemy's* chronology is a very weak one ; since there is no proper *historical evidence* that those eclipses were connected with any events in the corresponding years of those reigns. For

any thing that appears to the contrary, Ptolemy has only annexed to the table of eclipses, originally adjusted to a table of the Nabonassarian æra only, the years of the kings, according to his own ideas of their correspondence. This table of eclipses, *Montucla* says,* Ptolemy, no doubt, had from Hipparchus, who collected every thing that he could of that kind; and Hipparchus being merely an astronomer, it is the more probable that he was not solicitous about the adjustment of the years of the kings' reigns to those of the eclipses; and therefore that the years of the kings were added by Ptolemy himself. But whenever these years were added, there is no proof of their having been connected from the beginning; and without this, their *proper correspondence* ought not to be admitted.

The opinion of *Petavius* does not require any deduction from the whole period of years before the reign of *Xerxes*. For though he adds ten years to the reign of *Artaxerxes*, he takes nothing from the life or the reign of *Xerxes*, and though Archbishop Usher does take from the reign of *Xerxes*, yet he adds just so much to that of *Artaxerxes*.

SECTION VI.

Of the Duration of Christ's Ministry.

IT is remarkable that, in collecting the opinions of Christian critics on the subject of this Section, the farther we go back into antiquity, the shorter we find the duration of Christ's ministry was thought to be; and the oldest Christian fathers were almost universally of opinion, that our Lord preached no longer than one year,† or one year and a few months.

Sir Isaac Newton says, that "the Christians who first began to inquire into these things, as *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Origen*, *Tertullian*, *Julius Africanus*, *Lactantius*, *Jerome*, *Austin*, *Sulpicius Severus*, *Prosper*, and as many as placed the death of Christ in the 15th or 16th year of *Tiberius*, make Christ to have preached but one year, or at most but two. At length *Eusebius* discovered four successive pass-overs in the Gospel of John, and thereupon set on foot an opinion that he preached three years and a half, and so died in the 19th year of *Tiberius*."‡

* *Histoire des Mathématiques*, l. p. 60. (P.)

† "Clemens, in his first book of Traditions, sets forth that 'Christ preached only one year.'" *Hist. of Popery*, 1735, l. p. 254.

‡ *Observ. on Daniel*, pp. 145, 146. (P.)

According to the best accounts we can collect of the harmony of *Tatian*,* but concerning which critics have differed very much, he divided the ministry of Christ into three years, but in fact only meant two years and a part of another. But *Eusebius* extended it to a year more.

The opinion of *Eusebius* is now generally prevalent, though there are some critics who extend the public ministry of Christ a year or two farther.

It is evident, however, that *Eusebius* had a very different idea of the distribution of the events in the gospel history from our modern harmonists. He says, "It is evident that all the acts of our Saviour related by Matthew, Mark, or Luke, are those that followed the imprisonment of John, and were comprised within the space of one year; and that John enlarged the history, by taking in the events that preceded the imprisonment of the Baptist."† *Eusebius*, therefore, throws that business into one year, which the generality of Harmonists distribute into two or three.

I own I cannot help expressing my surprise, that so little regard should have been paid to the opinion of those who lived the nearest to the time of Christ, and therefore had, certainly, the best opportunity of being well informed concerning it; and especially that Sir Isaac Newton himself, after reciting what I have quoted from him, should extend the ministry of Christ so as to comprehend in it five pass-overs. And yet when Mr. Mann, with his modesty and ingenuity, proposed the original hypothesis, of one year, he absolutely staggered and offended, as I may say, the whole Christian world; and I never heard of so much as one single person having adopted his opinion.‡

Without, however, being discouraged by this circumstance, I thought that the deliberate sentiments of such a writer as Mr. Mann at least deserved attention; and I must

* See *Lardner*, II. pp. 137, 138.

† *Hist. L. xiii. C. xxiv. (P.)*

‡ Mr. Mann's opinion had, however, been adopted in a former century, by Francis Burman, Professor of Divinity at Utrecht, where he died in 1679, aged 51. His *Exercitationes Academicæ* were published at Rotterdam in 1688. This work was noticed, in 1692, under the title of "Dissertations of Mr. Burman," in a *folio* volume which is, probably, the earliest English *Review* of books.

On the subject in question the Reviewer says, "Opinions have been always much divided about the duration of the ministry of Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church.—The most common opinion is, that he preached the space of three or three years and a half. Mr. Burman takes another party, and maintains, that Jesus Christ celebrated but two Feasts of the Passover: whence he concludes, 'That he could live but a year and a half after his baptism.'" See "The Young Student's Library, containing Extracts and Abridgements of the most valuable Books printed in England, and in the Foreign Journals, from the year sixty-five to this time."—By the *Athenian Society*. Printed for John Dunton, 1692, pp. 107, 111.

acknowledge, that the more attention I have given to his scheme, the more evidence I see in favour of it, and the more improbable every contrary hypothesis appears to me; and I have at present a satisfaction that I cannot express in reading the gospel history with his ideas of it. Upon this plan, all the events have a much more easy and natural connexion than upon any other; they have consequently a greater *propriety* and an additional *evidence*.

Mr. Mann seems to have been led to his hypothesis by his peculiar interpretation of *Daniel's* prophecy of seventy weeks, with which he makes it correspond. But though it has been seen that I agree with him in the time that he assigns for the birth of Christ, I think him mistaken with respect to the time of his death, which he places in the year 26, or the 15th of Tiberius, reckoned from the time of his becoming associate in the empire, with *Augustus*. And I rather wonder that this excellent critic should allow so much to the evidence of the Christian fathers in one of these cases, and so little in the other; especially as the two opinions of Christ having preached but one year, and of his having been crucified when the *Gemini* were consuls, went together, and therefore rest upon the same authority.

I shall now proceed to recite, in brief, the evidence that Mr. Mann has produced in favour of his scheme, besides what arises from its agreement with the dates that he assigns to the birth and death of Christ, and his interpretation of the prophecy of *Daniel* above-mentioned.

In addition to those fathers who held the same opinion with himself quoted by Sir Isaac Newton, he adds the testimony of *Justin Martyr* and *Valentinus* the heretic.*

Luke, he observes, mentions only two epochs in his history of Christ, that of his birth, and that of his baptism; and therefore was with reason understood by the fathers to comprehend in the second epoch his death with his baptism, both happening within the compass of the same year, or but a few months more. To this, says he, may be added the probability that this evangelist mentions both *Annas* and *Caiaphas* as high priests, because *Annas* was in that office in that year† in which was most of the preaching and miracles of Christ, and *Caiaphas* in the other,‡ in the first quarter of which our Lord suffered.§

The passage in *Isaiah* lxi. 1, 2, which our Lord read in the synagogue at Nazareth, and which he notified to be then

* See *supra*, p. 47; *Theol. Repos.* II. p. 44, No. 4.

† P. J. 4738. *Ibid.*

‡ P. J. 4739. *Ibid.*

§ See *ibid.* pp. 43, 44, No. 1.

fulfilled, viz. *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me—to preach the acceptable year of the Lord*, was anciently, he says, thought to signify that Christ was to preach but one year, distinguished by that appellation. *

Matthew, Mark, and Luke evidently supposed the preaching of only one year; and even John's Gospel, which alone has been thought to suppose more, will not, in fact, be found to do so. For he mentions only one summer and one winter; he describes the events of only two passovers, one pentecost, one feast of tabernacles, and one feast of dedication; and he mentions them in their natural order, if we suppose that the 6th *chapter* of this evangelist hath been transposed out of its proper place, and that it should precede the 5th. But the marks of the transposition he thinks to be evident.

1. The last words of *chap. v.* are mentioned as spoken by Jesus in Jerusalem, and the words immediately following them, in *chap. vi.*, without any introduction or preparation whatever, represent him passing out of Galilee to the eastern side of the sea of Tiberias; but this is an easy sequel of the 4th *chapter*, which left him in Galilee. Again, the end of the 5th *chapter* has the same easy connexion with the beginning of the 7th, that the end of the 4th has with the beginning of the 6th. For in *chap. v. 16* and *18*, Jesus, in Jerusalem, is reasoning with the Jews, who were seeking to kill him; and the 7th *chapter* opens with an account of his going into Galilee, because the Jews sought to kill him. But as the chapters stand at present, the 6th represents him teaching at Capernaum, in Galilee; and yet the 7th begins with these words, "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee," as if he had been just arrived there from some other territory.

2. The passovers, as the *chapters* are now ranged, are multiplied beyond all probability: for, *chap. iv. 45*, Jesus appears to be just returned from the first passover, and cures the nobleman's son at Capernaum; and at the end of nine verses more, (*v. 1.*) he is gone back to the second passover, (as some reckon it), and nothing more is said of him during the remainder of that first year. From this imaginary passover, (*v. 1.*), when Jesus healed the cripple at the pool of Bethesda, to the feast of tabernacles, (*vii. 2.*) that is, according to the modern account, during all the second year, the third passover, and half the third year, he is only said to have worked one miracle, and the next day to have taught in Capernaum; and nothing more is said of him for all the rest

of the supposed eighteen months. Now doth it seem at all probable, that any person, professing to write the history of Christ's public ministry, during the space of about three years, should omit near two years and a half of that time?

3. It appears that Jesus retired to the desert of Bethsaida upon the death of *John the Baptist*, and there fed the five thousand. This is mentioned *John* vi. 5; and yet, in *v.* 35, Jesus at Jerusalem, speaks of him as of one who had been dead some time before: "He was a burning and a shining light." But to this argument of Mr. Mann it may be replied, that it might refer to *John's* being in prison, as well as to his being dead.

It may be objected to the whole of Mr. Mann's hypothesis, that in *John* vi. 4. we read, *and the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh*. But it cannot, he says, be supposed that John wrote so; because he had mentioned the passover in *chap.* ii. and even related several of the events of it; and therefore could not suppose that his readers would want an explanation of the term in that place. *Gerard Vossius*, therefore, and other critics, would read, *and a feast of the Jews was nigh*, and imagine that the word *passover* was first added, as a conjectural explanation of some person or other. However, the ancient fathers could never have imagined, as they did, that Christ preached only one year, if this third passover had been so expressly mentioned in their copies of this gospel. Besides, there is no mention of Christ's assisting at any third passover.*

SECTION VII.

Remarks on some of the Arguments of Mr. Mann, with Observations in Confirmation of them.

THUS I have given an epitome of the arguments that Mr. Mann has advanced in favour of his hypothesis, to which I would add the following *remarks*, previous to some distinct *additional arguments* in favour of it.

1. It has been observed, since Mr. Mann's publication, that *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and the rest of the fathers who embraced the same opinion, were led to it by their peculiar interpretation of the above-mentioned passage in *Isaiah*, On the contrary, it appears to me that the interpretation is so very singular and unnatural, that it could never have

* See *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 44—47; *True Years*, pp. 161—163, in *Appendix*, No. III.

suggested the opinion ; but that the opinion, once previously fixed, viz. that Christ preached only one year, might very easily have led such interpreters of the Scriptures as the fathers were, to that explanation of the text ; and that nothing but a corresponding opinion, generally received, could have made such an interpretation supportable. It could never have stood its ground against a contrary opinion.

2. Mr. Mann thinks that the fathers supposed St. Luke, in the date that he fixes to the baptism of Christ, viz. the 15th of Tiberius, meant to include that of his death also ; and that, in reality, it is to the latter event, as being the more important of the two, that those dates correspond. I own I see no foundation for this construction, either with respect to the thing itself, or the opinion of the fathers concerning it. On the contrary, it is certainly most natural to suppose that if Christ was baptized in the 15th of Tiberius, and preached one entire year after that, he must have died in the 16th of that emperor, which is the year in which the Gemini were consuls. But notwithstanding this mistake of Mr. Mann, I think the conduct of Luke upon this occasion affords almost a demonstration that the year of Christ's death immediately followed that of his baptism.

Luke has given us the date of *John the Baptist's* beginning to preach with a most remarkable precision. " Now in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness," &c. There is, perhaps, no example of any other event so circumstantially and emphatically dated, in the whole compass of history. Now can it be supposed that the same writer would leave an event of infinitely more consequence, viz. that of the *death of Christ*, with which his history terminates, without any date at all ? But this is the case if he has left no trace by which the one may be certainly inferred from the other ; in consequence of having confounded the events of several years, in such a manner that no person can pretend to distinguish or number them. Whereas the conduct of this writer is perfectly reconcileable with itself, upon the supposition that, in his idea, the year of the death of Christ immediately followed that of the preaching of John, no other year intervening between them ; for then the date of the one would be abundantly sufficient for the

date of the other ; and it was certainly more natural to give the date at the beginning than at the end of the work.

Now it is universally acknowledged that, had no other gospel than that of Luke been extant, it must have been taken for granted, that the whole history, from the commencement of the preaching of John to the death of Christ, was comprehended within the space of less than two years, no mention of passovers, or any other marks of time, indicating the contrary.

3. If ever any weight ought to be allowed to a *negative argument*, I think we may safely conclude, from what *Irenæus* says on the duration of Christ's ministry,* that he had not seen any copy of the Gospel of *John* that contained the word *πασχα* in the 4th verse of the 6th chapter. For though it is evident he was most eagerly bent upon collecting all the evidence he possibly could against the opinion of the Valentinians, viz. that Christ preached only one year ; and he particularly remarks all the passages in the Gospel of John where he imagined a passover was intended, though not expressed ; he makes no mention of this in the 6th chapter, but dwells upon that feast of which mention is made in the 5th chapter, on which Jesus cured the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda.

His commentator Mr. Grabe acknowledges that his author must have been mistaken in his inference ; but says that, in the chapter following (which *Irenæus* had quoted in some other place) there was express mention made of another passover. Had *Irenæus* ever seen that passage, as we now read it, he would, I doubt not, have preferred it (as infinitely better adapted to his purpose) to the feast mentioned in the 5th chapter, concerning which not the least hint can be collected that it was a passover. It is remarkable, however, that, even with the help of this groundless assumption, *Irenæus* is not able to extend the ministry of Christ beyond the space of two years, by any evidence from the gospel history.

But to shew how little credit is to be given to this writer upon this subject, and how far his zeal against what he deemed to be heresy was capable of carrying him, he, in the same chapter, extends the life of Christ to a period beyond fifty years ; partly on the supposition of the necessity of his being an example to persons of every age, and partly on the

* L. ii. C. xxxix. (P.)

evidence, as he says, of all the ancients who had conversed with the apostle *John* in Asia, and of others who had the same account from other apostles.

But it does not appear that *Irenæus* made many converts to his opinion. It is mentioned, indeed, by *Austin*, but only as the opinion of persons unskilled in history ; and we find the most learned fathers who immediately followed *Irenæus*, as *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, &c. had embraced the reprobated opinion of *Valentinus*, without the least mention of any contrary opinion deserving the least notice.

Lastly, it will be found, upon examination, that Eusebius could not have had a copy of the Gospel of John which had the word $\pi\alpha\sigma\chi\alpha$ in the sixth chapter, and have supposed, as he did, that all the events mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, were comprised within the space of one year.

SECTION. VIII.

*Additional Arguments in support of the Hypothesis that Christ preached only one Year and a few Months. **

To these remarks relating to some of the arguments alleged by Mr. Mann, I would suggest the following distinct additional arguments in favour of the period which he has assigned to the public ministry of Christ.

1. Some very short periods of our Lord's public ministry appear, according to the accounts of all the evangelists, to have been very full of business. He seems to have been almost incessantly employed in teaching, in healing great numbers of diseased persons, and performing other miraculous works ; and from the manner in which the evangelists describe his usual way of life, it should seem that the greatest part of his time was thus fully employed. He continually went about doing good, making it *his meat and his drink to do the will of his heavenly Father*.

If, now, our Lord had passed three or four years in this manner, and the twelve apostles had also been teaching and working miracles in six different places for the space of a year or more, in that small country, and the seventy also in thirty-five places more, for the same space of time, as is generally supposed ; such a number of miracles would have been performed, as we cannot but think must have exceeded every

* This Section, and the following, to the end of No. VII. formed *Essay II.* in *Theol. Repos.* II, pp. 47—59. See *infra*, p. 62.

proper purpose of them. Either there could have been no *unbelievers* left in Judea; or, if the tendency of the miracles had been to exasperate, such a resentment would have been raised in the minds of the Jewish rulers, as, without a greater miracle than any of the rest, could not but have terminated in his death long before. For my own part, instead of thinking a single year not to have been sufficient for the purpose of our Lord's mission, I rather wonder, considering in what manner he spent his time, that the incredulity of the people could hold out, or that the malice of his enemies could be restrained so long as one year.

Considering the violent prejudices that such a people as the Jews must have had against the pretensions of a *Messiah* who made the appearance that Jesus did, one may indeed imagine, that the bulk, or the more depraved and worldly-minded of them, might withstand the evidence of miracles performed in one year; but hardly any degree of incredulity can be supposed to have stood out against the thousands and ten thousands of miracles that must have been wrought upon the common hypothesis.

2. It is also more easy to account for the prejudices of the apostles, and their ignorance of the true nature of Christ's kingdom, even at, and after our Lord's death, on the supposition that his ministry was of a short, than that it was of a long duration.

3. If our Lord really preached three or four years; and, consequently, if the evangelists have sometimes passed over all the events of whole years at a time, is it not surprising that none of them should ever connect those very distant parts of their narrative by such phrases as *the year following*; *after one*, or *after two years*, &c. &c.? The *seasons of the year* are sometimes particularly distinguished, and we find the exact number of *days* that intervened between two events carefully noted; but nothing that implies such chasms as are commonly supposed to be in the evangelical history. Their usual transition, *after these things*, or *afterwards*, cannot be construed to mean *after a year or two*.

4. If Jesus had been preaching and working miracles, both in *Judea* and in *Galilee*, almost a year before the death of *John the Baptist*, agreeable to the common hypothesis, *Herod*, who reigned in Galilee, could not but have heard of him; and therefore could not but have known that he was not *John* that was risen from the dead, as in *Matt. xiv. 1*. Whereas, if we suppose that Jesus had preached only a few weeks before the death of *John*, we may imagine, that, en-

gaged as Herod was in a multiplicity of business and pleasure, he might not have heard of him till that time; and therefore might, with some plausibility, conjecture, as he did, that he was *John* risen from the dead. This argument appears to me to be almost conclusive against the common hypothesis.

5. All our Lord's journeys that the evangelists give us any account of, agree in so many circumstances, that they are evidently the same, and are supposed to be so by all harmonists. Now since these four historians have selected very different events in our Saviour's life, is it not surprising, that all his journeys to Jerusalem make no more than four; three of which, at least, every pious Jew was obliged to make in the compass of every year? Our Lord must have made that journey three or four times as often, in three or four years, and it may well be supposed that something remarkable must have happened in several of them, besides those four. *John*, who supplies many of the deficiencies of the other evangelists, only makes up the number of them to four. He supplies many new discourses, and new incidents, but no more journeys to Jerusalem than those above-mentioned.

If we read the history of the evangelists with attention, we shall find several small periods of time, as was observed before, exceedingly crowded with business, particularly a week or two after his appearance in Galilee, after the first passover, and a week before his death. If only a month or two of the year were spent in this manner, all the business that is recorded in all the evangelists might have been transacted in it; so that, even upon this hypothesis, we must suppose great omissions in our Lord's history according to the testimony of *John*.

SECTION IX.

Objections to the preceding Hypothesis considered.

IT may be objected to the hypothesis I am maintaining, that though it is *possible* that all the events that are expressly mentioned in the history of our Lord, might have been comprehended within the compass of one year, yet that several *circumstances* and *expressions* also lead us to suppose, that more is suppressed than could be brought within that space of time; particularly our Lord's tarrying and making disciples in Judea before he went to Galilee, after the first pass-

over, *John* iii. 22 ; his dwelling "in Capernaum," *Matt.* iv. 13 ; and his going "about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues," (*verse* 23,) "on the sabbath-days," *Luke* iv. 31. It is also said, that the missions of the *twelve* and of the *seventy*, must have taken up more time than can be allowed for them on this hypothesis. I shall therefore consider all these cases a little particularly ; and the illustration I shall give of them may perhaps assist us to understand the force of similar expressions, when they occur elsewhere.

I. Though *John* (iii. 22) speaks of our Lord's *tarrying* in Judea, after the first passover, and before his going into Galilee, and making more disciples there than *John* did at the same time, yet several circumstances make it evident, that his stay in Judea at that time could not have been long. For not only do the other evangelists make no mention of this stay in Judea ; but the manner in which they all relate the history of the first transactions in Galilee, shews that they had no idea of any thing considerable having been done before.

Matthew (iv. 17) says, that it was after his coming to Capernaum that "Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Mark (i. 28) represents the great fame of Jesus in Galilee to have arisen from the miracle which he performed in the synagogue at Capernaum, on the day that he healed Peter's wife's mother.

Luke closely connects his account of the temptation with that of his preaching in Galilee, saying, (iv. 14,) "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about."

From the history of the transactions at the first passover, it is evident that the *Pharisees* were, at that time, very attentive to our Lord's conduct ; so that his making disciples in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem cannot be supposed to have escaped their notice many days : from which we may conclude, that whatever effect our Lord's apprehensions from the Jews could have had, must have been produced very soon, probably in less than a week. Having been baptized in that country, having been distinguished by a voice from heaven, and having been so particularly pointed out by *John* there, he could not be long in making disciples enow to alarm the Jews. Besides, it is probable that most of the disciples that Jesus made, (at which the Jews took umbrage,) were made before the passover ; so that a few days after-

wards, in which he was sure to be carefully watched, would be sufficient to alarm his enemies, and to induce him to withdraw himself from their envy and malice.

Lastly, *Peter* and *Andrew*, *James* and *John*, the first of our Lord's disciples, did not particularly attend upon him till after his arrival in Galilee; which I think is a presumption, that he had not spent much time in preaching elsewhere; a great part of our Lord's business being to instruct his apostles, and train them up to their future services in the church.

II. *Matthew*, indeed, mentions Jesus's *dwelling* at Capernaum; but he could not mean that he resided there for any long time together; since our Lord himself sufficiently intimated, that he had no fixed habitation during his public ministry, when he said, (*Matt.* viii. 20,) "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." It is possible that the meaning of *Matthew* might be, that our Lord's family, that is, his mother and brethren, removed to Capernaum about that time, as they are expressly said to have done by *John* (ii. 12) a little before the passover, though they did not make a long stay at that time, but went up to the feast. We also afterwards find Jesus's mother and brethren at Capernaum, and in the neighbourhood, when his brethren are expressly said not to have been his disciples.

Or, perhaps, our Lord's dwelling at Capernaum may only mean that it was the place where he most frequently was, during his stay in Galilee. And we do, indeed, find that this town was, as it were, the centre of our Lord's business, and the *terminus* of all his journeys.

But notwithstanding this, we may infer that Capernaum did by no means particularly engage the attention of Jesus, from his joining *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida* with it, in the woe which he pronounced upon those places in which his mighty works had been chiefly done, for not improving the opportunities his presence had afforded them.

III. As to our Lord's *preaching in all the synagogues of Galilee*, mentioned *Matt.* iv. 23, the time that he was absent from Capernaum, on that very progress, does not admit of its being understood literally. For *Mark*, describing the very same progress, in language similar to that of *Matthew*; saying, (i. 38, 39,) that *he left Capernaum* "to go into the next towns" to "preach there also," and that "he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out

devils ;” yet says, (ii. 1,) that “ he entered again into Capernaum, after some days” only.

Besides, these general expressions concerning Christ’s preaching in all the towns of Galilee, though introduced in this particular place, may refer to all the time that he passed in that country, in which it is probable that few of the places escaped him or his disciples ; and that he omitted no opportunity of preaching in the synagogues wherever he could conveniently go.

Luke, indeed, says, (iv. 31,) that *when Jesus* “ came down to Capernaum,” he “ taught them on the sabbath-days,” τοῖς σαββάσι ; from which some infer, that he spent several sabbaths there at that time ; and Dr. Doddridge, in enumerating the objections to Mr Mann’s hypothesis, seems to lay stress on this circumstance.* But there are several instances, in the *New Testament*, in which the plural of σαββατον is used for the singular, as in *Matt.* xxviii. 1, οὗτε δε σαββατων, which we render “ in the end of the sabbath.” Indeed it could not have been rendered otherwise ; for it means that one particular sabbath on which our Lord lay in the grave. *Mark* ii. 23 : “ And it came to pass that he went through the corn-fields on the sabbath-day ; εν τοῖς σαββάσι. Also this evangelist *Luke* (xiii. 10) : “ And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath,” εν τοῖς σαββάσι.

But the most decisive argument is derived from the parallel part of the history, as related by *Mark*, (i. 21,) who makes use of the same expression with *Luke*, in relating the same events on the same day. “ And they went into Capernaum, and straight-way on the sabbath-day (τοῖς σαββάσι) he entered into the synagogue.” Then follows the history of the cure of the *demoniac*, and of Peter’s wife’s mother, &c. exactly as in *Luke*. It is evident, therefore, that *Luke* meant only *one day*, though he uses the plural number, and the very same day that *Mark* doth, whose expression (though the same with that of *Luke*) we translate in the singular number.

IV. The mission of the *twelve* is generally supposed to have taken up a considerable time ; but from the circumstances in which it is related by all the evangelists, it doth not appear that the apostles could have been absent more than about a week, on that occasion.

According to *Matthew*, all that intervened between the mission of the *twelve* and their return, (intimated by the

* See his *Note* on *John* vi. 4, *Fam. Expos.* 1761, l. p. 509.

transactions in which we find the disciples with our Lord) is the discourse concerning *John*; and all that intervened between them, according to *Mark* and *Luke*, are, the very same discourse, and the alarm of Herod on hearing of the miracles of Jesus; though they place both the mission of the *twelve*, and the discourse concerning *John*, in different parts of the general history.

If it be said that the charge which our Lord gave them, *Matt. x.*, is too particular, and too solemn, for so short an excursion; I answer, that upon any supposition, the charge he gave them on that occasion will be found to respect several circumstances that could not happen in that particular mission, but must refer to their general mission afterwards; especially what he says concerning their behaviour when carried before magistrates and kings, and concerning persecution unto death.

Besides, though the *twelve* might return pretty soon after their first excursion, occasioned by their being alarmed on hearing of the death of *John the Baptist*, we need not suppose that the mission expired at that time. It might be resumed occasionally afterwards, and especially in the latter part of our Lord's preaching in Galilee.

V. *Luke* is the only evangelist who mentions the mission of the *seventy*; and he says, (x. 1,) it was during our Lord's journey to Jerusalem, when he took his final leave of Galilee, and that *they were sent* "into every—place whither he himself should come;" and he speaks of their return, in *ver. 17* of the same chapter, before he mentions his arrival at Jerusalem. It is evident, from the circumstances of the history, that our Lord made this journey more privately than any others, and arrived at Jerusalem in the middle of the feast, which was that of tabernacles. Perhaps, therefore, he dismissed his train, partly with a view to travel with less appearance of ostentation; and they might only go to those places through which he himself intended to pass, in his road to Jerusalem at that time. Though, it is possible, however, he might mean the places where he should come afterwards, in the stay he, from that time, made in Judea; but still, being so many of them, and going *two and two*, they would soon have visited every place in that small country. And if they followed the example of our Lord, in his excursions from Capernaum, they stayed a very short time in any place, probably seldom more than one day. This mission also might be resumed occasionally as well as that of the *twelve*, for Galilee.

But all these particulars will perhaps be seen in a stronger point of light, when I shall give a succinct view of all our Lord's history, in the order of time; and collect all the notes of time, and other marks of transition, that are preserved in any of the evangelists. This is such a view as, I flatter myself, will shew not only the possibility, but also the probability of this scheme of a harmony, in a manner independent of all other arguments in its favour.

VI. When our Lord was discoursing with his disciples at the well, in his journey to Galilee, he says, *John* iv. 35, "Say ye not, There are yet four months and then cometh harvest?" This, according to some critics (and among them Sir Isaac Newton) implies that, at the time of this journey, it wanted four months to the harvest; and consequently must have been some time in December, which by no means suits Mr. Mann's hypothesis. But I would observe, that this time of the year doth not at all agree with what is generally, and with great probability, supposed, that the heat of the weather concurred with the fatigue of travelling to increase the thirst our Lord complained of; but that it agrees remarkably well with the supposition of this journey having been made about a week after the passover, or about the middle of April; especially as it is said, (*John* iv. 6,) to have been "about the sixth hour" of the day, or noon. Wherefore *Grotius*, *Whitby*, and many other commentators, suppose that our Lord quoted a known proverbial expression which implied that four months generally intervened between seed-time and harvest. And whether there was such a proverbial expression current among the Jews or not, I cannot help thinking there was a peculiar propriety in the observation at that time. Our Lord, in his conversation with the woman, had, as it were, been sowing the seed of the word; and he foresaw the immediate effect of it. He therefore says, four months commonly intervene between seed-time and harvest, but I have only just now sown, and, lifting up your eyes, you will see, by the multitudes crowding to us, that the fields are already white for my harvest.

VII. Another objection arises from the *much grass* that is said to have been in the place where our Lord fed the five thousand; and which, it is thought, doth not well agree with the time of the year in which Mr. Mann places this event. But Mr. Mann places it before *pentecost*,* and it

* "*John* vi. 5: 'There was much grass in the place,' which in *Palestine* is ready for mowing in *March*, and is quite scorched up in *May*. It was therefore before *pentecost*." See *True Years*, p. 171.

might be about the latter end of April, or the beginning of May that year; and though the greatest part of the grass in Judea be burnt up in the month of May, it is not very improbable that, in some favourable situation, some might remain, and even be *green* in the *beginning* of the month, supposing it to have been so late. As it is not the custom to mow the grass for hay in that part of the world, if there had been any grass in the place, it would, probably, have remained there all the summer, it being a desert place; and *Mark*, who was not present, is the only evangelist who mentions its being green.*

VIII. It would rather embarrass Mr. Mann's hypothesis, to suppose that the *Cana* in which our Lord "made the water wine," and to which he went from Samaria before his arrival at Capernaum, was the *Cana* near Sidon; because there would hardly be sufficient time for our Lord's journey on foot, and the stay that he made at Sychar, and probably in other places, before his arrival at Capernaum, time enough to admit of the events which intervened between that date and the feast of *pentecost*.

But there is no reason to suppose that that was the *Cana*, but another, much nearer to Capernaum, viz. that *Cana* which is mentioned by *Josephus*, as being so near to *Tiberias*, that, setting out from *Cana* in the evening, and travelling all night, with two hundred armed men, he arrived at *Tiberias* early the next morning.† Nor, indeed, do I see why the *Cana* mentioned in the Gospel should be called *Cana in Galilee*, but to distinguish it from some other place of the same name, in another district, probably from the *Cana* near Sidon, which was properly in Phœnicia, as that term appears to have been used in the time of our Saviour and the apostles.

Thus *Tyre*, which was south of Sidon and *Cana*, is called (*Acts* xxi. 2, 3) a city of Phœnicia, and a woman living in that neighbourhood, whose daughter was cured by our Saviour, is called (*Mark* vii. 26) a Syro-Phœnician, and "a woman of Canaan," (*Matt.* xv. 22,) perhaps from being an inhabitant of this very *Cana*, and not a *Galilean*. Besides, *Josephus* distinguishes this *Cana* from the other by calling it a city of *Cœle-Syria*;‡ and he represents Galilee as bounded by Phœnicia, including Ptolemais, Tyre, &c., so

* The preceding paragraphs of this Section are part of *Essay II. Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 51—59. See *supra*, p. 54, *Note*.

† See "Life of Flavius Josephus," Sect. 16, 17, *Whiston*, fol. p. 662.

‡ *Antiq.* B. xiii. Ch. xv. Sect. i. ii.; *War*, B. i. Ch. iv. Sect. vii. viii.

that, though it went up within land as far north as Sidon, it is not probable that it included that Cana. Besides, the empress *Helena* built a church at Cana in Galilee, and not in the Cana near Sidon, in memory of its being the place which had been distinguished by our Saviour's presence and miracles; and it cannot be supposed that, in that age, the scene of those transactions should have been forgotten.

Of two Canas in Galilee, both of which agree sufficiently well with what *Josephus* says concerning the place of that name, one is mentioned by *Reland*,* as being situated between *Sepphoris* and Nazareth, six Roman miles from the latter, towards the west; and the other, four miles north of Nazareth, towards the east. *Reland* says, it is disputed which of these is the Cana mentioned in the Scriptures; but I think it very possible that these places may, in reality, be the same, their situation not having been accurately described.

That it must have been Cana near Nazareth that is spoken of by *John*, and not Cana near Sidon, seems to be evident from the most natural interpretation of what this evangelist says preceding his account of our Lord's arrival at that place, *John* ii. 1. Speaking of what passed at "Bethabara beyond Jordan," (*John* i. 28,) he says, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." We read afterwards, (*ver.* 35,) "Again the next day, John stood and two of his disciples;" and *ver.* 43, "The day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee;" and on the evening of this day, *Philip* introduced *Nathaniel* to Jesus. We then read, *chap.* ii. 1, "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee," which Jesus attended. Now it is most natural to suppose that *the third day* is to be counted from the date before mentioned, viz. the day on which he set out from beyond Jordan to go into Galilee; and this would not allow him time enough to go from Bethabara to Sidon, especially travelling on foot, as he probably did. Whereas, supposing it to be the Cana near Nazareth, he might very well go to it in less than two days, and there will be time enough for him to have stopped at Nazareth, and there to have received the invitation to Cana.

It is objected that when our Lord was at *Cana* afterwards, (*John* iv. 46,) the nobleman of Capernaum, whose son was

* *Palestina*, p. 680. (P.)

cured by Jesus, at “the seventh hour” of the day, did not meet his servant, who left Capernaum at the same time, till *the next day*; which, supposing that they both set out immediately after the cure, requires that they must have, each of them, travelled at least five hours, and probably, from the nature of the occasion, very quick. But even this does not necessarily make the distance to exceed thirty miles, viz. five miles an hour without interruption. Besides, it is by no means necessary to suppose that both the master and servant set out precisely “at the seventh hour” of the day, and that nothing happened to retard either of them.

IX. There are three other circumstances of which different harmonists have availed themselves, as favouring their respective hypotheses, and which do not suit with that of Mr. Mann. But it appears to me that they supply no certain notes of time whatever, and therefore may very safely be neglected.

Sir Isaac Newton supposes, that when our Lord delivered the *parable of the sower*, it was then *seed-time*.* According to Mr. Mann’s hypothesis, it was harvest. But the connexion between these two seasons is so great, that the one may very easily be supposed to have led his thoughts to the other. Besides, the parable does, in fact, relate to the harvest as well as to the seed-time.

The *tribute* which was demanded of our Lord, and which he paid in conjunction with *Peter*; and also the reading of the prophet *Isaiah*, a portion of which our Lord expounded at Nazareth, are thought to indicate certain seasons of the year. But it has neither been determined with certainty by the critics what the tribute was, nor the time of the year in which it was paid. Much less are we able to tell, at this distance of time, in what order the Jews read their sacred books in their synagogues, or whether they had one invariable custom in them all.

SECTION X.†

The Order of the principal Events in the Gospel History.

HAVING, in the preceding Sections, exhibited the arguments in favour of a *harmony* of the Gospels, upon the hypothesis that the public ministry of Jesus lasted only a

* *Observations on Daniel*, p. 154. (P.)

† *Essay* III. 1769, *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 98—105.

year and a few months ; I shall now proceed to adjust the order of the particular transactions in the Gospel history, and to give my reasons at large for my arrangement of the principal facts. But these, I imagine, will be much more intelligible, if, in the first place, I just recite the facts in the order in which I imagine them to have happened.

The reader will please to observe, that the subject of this and the following Sections has little or no dependence on the general hypothesis I have endeavoured to support in the preceding ones ; since the *order* in which any number of events may be supposed to have taken place, may be considered without any regard to the *time* that elapsed in the succession. In this case it is but substituting the word *passover* for *pentecost*, or the name of some other Jewish feast, and these Sections will suit any other hypothesis concerning the duration of Christ's ministry.

As most *harmonists*, I believe, are nearly agreed in the order of all the events preceding the baptism of Jesus ; at least, as nothing new has occurred to me with respect to them, I shall begin my narration at that period ; and in order to be as concise as possible, shall mention only such facts as may be sufficient to give a person who is tolerably acquainted with the *New Testament*, an idea of the order in which I should dispose the rest.

After his baptism and temptation, Jesus went into Galilee, and, at *Cana*, turned the water into wine. He then went to *Capernaum*, along with his mother, and the rest of the family ; and going from thence to Jerusalem, at the first passover, held a conversation with *Nicodemus*. After this, he made a short stay in Judea ; but the Pharisees taking umbrage at his making disciples there, he returned into Galilee ; and passing through Samaria, conversed with the woman at the well.

Being arrived at Cana, he was met by a nobleman from Capernaum, who entreated him to heal his son ; and going from thence to that city, he called Peter and Andrew, James and John ; and on the sabbath following, he cured a demoniac in the synagogue, and Peter's wife's mother in her own house, with many others. These miracles brought such a concourse of people about him, that the next morning, before it was day, he withdrew into a solitary place, whither his disciples resorted to him ; and, not choosing to return immediately to Capernaum, he made a circuit through the neighbouring towns and villages.

Great multitudes crowding to him from all quarters, he

addressed to them his excellent Sermon on the Mount. Presently after, he cured a leper, and not long after that, entering again into Capernaum, he healed the nobleman's servant. The day following, he was at Nain, where he raised the widow's son ; and from whence, to avoid another concourse of people, he crossed the sea, stilling a tempest in his passage ; and, landing in the territory of Gadara, he cured the demoniacs, when the swine were drowned.

Not making any stay in that country, he returned to Capernaum, and healed a paralytic person, who was let down through the roof of the house. After this he walked out by the sea side, and having called *Matthew*, he dined with him, and held a conversation with the disciples of *John*. While he was discoursing with them, *Jairus* applied to him to cure his daughter, who lay at the point of death. In his way he cured the woman who had the issue of blood, and after he returned from *Jairus's* house, he gave sight to two blind men, and cured a dumb demoniac.

Jesus having made himself obnoxious to the *Pharisees*, by vindicating his disciples for plucking ears of corn on a sabbath-day, and healing in the synagogue a man who had a withered hand, withdrew into a desert place, and, on a mountain, set apart the twelve apostles.

The multitudes crowding to him again, he healed their sick, and, among others, a blind and dumb demoniac ; and when the Pharisees ascribed this cure to a correspondence with Beelzebub, he discoursed concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost ; and when they asked of him a sign from heaven, he gave them the sign of the prophet *Jonas* ; and among other awful denunciations, he related to them the parable of the unclean spirit. While he was talking, and probably with a good deal of earnestness on this occasion, his mother and brethren desired to speak with him, which gave him an opportunity of expressing his superior regard to his disciples.

On the same day on which he held this discourse, he went to the sea side, and, for the greater convenience of speaking, stood in a ship, while he delivered several parables to the people standing on the shore ; and, among others, that of the sower, which he afterwards explained to his disciples, reciting to them several others.

Leaving the neighbourhood of *Capernaum*, he went to *Nazareth* ; and being rejected, and having had his life attempted by his countrymen of that place, he went into the neighbouring villages ; and seeing great multitudes, as sheep

without a shepherd, he had compassion on them, and commissioned the twelve apostles to preach to them, and heal their sick.

In the absence of the *twelve*, the disciples of John apply to him, bringing a message from their master; and when they had left him, he discoursed with the multitude concerning John, and at the same time pronounced a woe upon the places in which most of his mighty works had been performed.

About this time Jesus dined with Simon the Pharisee, to whom, when he was disgusted with the affectionate behaviour of a woman who had been a sinner, he related the parable of the creditor and two debtors.

Jesus, hearing of the death of *John the Baptist*, retired by ship into a desert place, together with the apostles who had resorted to him, and here he fed a great multitude with five loaves and two fishes. Having sent his disciples away by ship, while he stayed to dismiss the company, he came to them in the night, walking on the sea. They landed in the territory of Gennesaret; and the multitude, influenced by worldly motives, afterwards following him to Capernaum, he discoursed with them in so mysterious a manner concerning bread, that the greatest part of those who had followed him hitherto, deserted him now.

At the feast of *pentecost* Jesus cured a cripple at the pool of Bethesda, and discoursed with the Jews concerning his mission; but they seeking to kill him, he retreated again to Galilee, where he held a conversation with some Pharisees, who had followed him from Jerusalem, concerning traditions.

After this he went into the coasts of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, where he healed the daughter of a *Syrophaenician* woman; and being returned to Galilee, he cured a demoniac who was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. Being in a desert place, he again fed a great multitude by a miracle. At *Magdala* he discoursed with the Pharisees concerning the signs of the times, and at *Bethsaida* he cured a blind man.

After this he made an excursion to the coast of *Cæsarea Philippi*, and there began to foretell his sufferings and future glory. His transfiguration happened six days after. Descending from the Mount of Transfiguration he cured a demoniacal child; and after several discourses with his disciples, and other incidents at Capernaum, he took his final leave of Galilee. Travelling through Samaria, he

was not received by the people of that country. Here, however, he cured the ten lepers.

On this journey he sent out the *seventy*; and being arrived at Jerusalem, at the feast of tabernacles, he discoursed with the Jews concerning his mission, reprov'd the woman who was taken in adultery, and cured a man who had been blind from his birth.

In the interval between the feast of *tabernacles* and the feast of *dedication*, I place all those incidents and discourses which are related by *Luke* after his mention of Jesus's having taken his final leave of Galilee, and before those events that are closely connected with the history of his death, and for which I can find no other place, by means of a corresponding story in some other evangelist. Here, therefore, I introduce the discourse concerning the Galileans killed by Pilate, the parable of the good Samaritan, of the wedding supper, of the prodigal son, of the rich man and Lazarus, and of the Pharisee and Publican, with some others.

At the feast of dedication, Jesus, in the temple, publicly declared himself to be the *Messiah*, and the Jews thereupon seeking to kill him, he retired to the country beyond Jordan, where he held the discourse concerning divorces, and the danger of riches; and where he blessed the children that were brought to him, &c.

From this country he made a journey into Judea, to raise from the dead his friend Lazarus; but having by this miracle, performed in the presence of many of his enemies, greatly enrag'd the Pharisees and rulers of the Jews, he retired to Ephraim, in the wilderness of Judea.

Journeying from these parts to Jerusalem, before the second passover, he again foretold his sufferings; and passing through *Jericho*, in the neighbourhood of that town, he cured a blind man, and visited Zaccheus.

Coming in view of Jerusalem, he lamented over it; and being arrived at Bethany, he supped with Simon the Leper, where *Lazarus* was present, and his sister Mary anointed him; which gave such offence to *Judas Iscariot*, that from that time he formed a resolution to betray him to his enemies, who were now, more than ever, intent upon putting him to death.

The next day he entered the city in triumph, and purged the temple. The morning following, on his return from *Bethany*, (where he now lodged every night,) he cursed the barren fig-tree, (the effects of which were seen the next day,) and held many discourses in the temple.

In this manner he passed his time till the day before he suffered; on the evening of which he ate the passover with his disciples; and Judas, whose treachery he had detected, having left them, he instituted the Lord's Supper; and then discoursed with the eleven in a most affectionate manner, and foretold Peter's denial of him.

Leaving the house in which they had supped, and perhaps coming in view of the Mount of Olives, he discoursed concerning the true vine, gave his disciples the promise of the Comforter in his absence from them; and, in a solemn prayer, recommended them to the care and blessing of God his father.

Being arrived at *Gethsemane*, he was seized with an agony in a garden; and Judas arriving with a company of armed men, and some of the Jewish rulers, he was conducted first to Annas, then to Caiaphas, and afterwards to Pilate; who, after sending him to Herod, sentenced him to be crucified.

The order of the subsequent transactions it is not to my purpose at present to consider.

Such is the order in which I would choose to dispose the leading events in the life of Christ, which the reader will perceive to be considerably different from that of Mr. Mann, and I believe also from that of all other *harmonists*. In the next Section I shall proceed to exhibit the reasons of this arrangement, or the evidence of the harmony.

SECTION XI.*

General preliminary Remarks, relating to the Order of the Events in the Gospel History.

OF the many original histories of the life of Christ, which were probably once extant, four only are come down to us; but they are abundantly sufficient to confirm our faith in the truth of the facts. The external evidence of the authenticity of these books is remarkably strong; and an attentive reader will be equally struck with the internal evidence, to which my observations on the harmony of their histories relate. None but the persons to whom they are ascribed, or, which is the same thing, with respect to us, persons who enjoyed equal advantages for writing such histories, could have composed them.

* *Essay IV. Sect i. Theol. Repos. II. pp. 105—112.*

It is the more probable that they wrote from their memory, and therefore that they actually heard and saw what they relate, as there is not, on the face of their writings, a single trace of imagination, or of an attention to any thing that might serve to embellish their narrative. From the beginning to the end of all the evangelists, there appear no more marks of a capacity for fiction, than there are of an inclination to it.

Two of these historians, *Matthew* and *John*, were, in a great measure, eye-witnesses of what they relate. The two others, *Mark* and *Luke*, were not eye-witnesses, but appear to have been well informed concerning their subject. They all, however, seem to have been equally careless of the order of events; but with respect to the two former, nature has more than supplied the place of art. As the circumstances of time and place are necessarily presented to the mind of an eye-witness, along with other circumstances of any transaction, because they were really co-existent and inseparable from it, so the ideas of time and place will force themselves upon the mind; and, unless the person who relates from his memory be particularly upon his guard, they will, even unnecessarily and improperly, intrude themselves into the narrative.

This we see exemplified every time that a person, uninstructed in the arts of speaking and writing, tells a story; and we have examples of it in the writings of *Matthew* and *John*, where we perceive more characters of time, and more marks of an orderly narrative, in the transitions from story to story, than in those of *Mark* and *Luke*. *Mark*, however, has preserved more of these circumstances of events than *Luke*; so many that I can hardly persuade myself that he was not present, at least, at some of the transactions.

Many good reasons may be assigned for the neglect of the order of time in those evangelists who were best acquainted with it. This is by no means the most natural, or the best method of relating events, as we see verified in every writer of lives, even those who are the most methodical and exact; because other relations have a stronger effect upon the mind than that of *time*, particularly a resemblance in the *cause* or *effect* of any incidents.

Several circumstances would contribute to throw irregularity into a history of Christ, written by one who was witness to it, and had often told it. It is probable that what was called *preaching Christ*, at the promulgation

of Christianity, consisted chiefly in reciting the particulars of the life of Christ; so that the Gospels were the substance of the preaching, as it may be called, of the apostles and evangelists. In this case it cannot be supposed that they regularly began with the birth and ended with the death of Christ; but rather that single incidents would be related occasionally, as particular occasions called for them; and, in time, all the stories would get quite other associations, and be connected with one another various ways besides that of the order in which they happened; and the longer they deferred writing their histories, the fewer traces we may expect to find of this order. According to Dr. Lardner,* the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, were all written about the year of Christ 64, and that of *John* in 68.

The causes that tended to make the evangelists inattentive to the order of time in which things happened, would not in the least tend to alter or deprave the history itself, or make their testimony to all the facts the less to be depended on. For, as every distinct story would necessarily be repeated entire, they would each of them fall into one uniform method of telling it, and all the parts of any story would cohere perfectly, when the connexion of the different stories with one another might be entirely lost. Besides, independent of constant and uniform repetition, the contiguous part of one thing cannot but have a closer connexion in the mind that contemplates them, than any two different things.

It has been thought by many, and especially Dr. Henry Owen,† that there are evident traces of *Mark* and *Luke* having copied or abridged *Matthew*, because they sometimes make use of the same expressions in relating the same things. But it appears to me that every thing of this nature may very easily have arisen from the manner in which I suppose the Gospels were originally written, viz. *in detached parts*. Some of these might have been committed to writing by the apostles themselves, and some by their auditors, corrected by themselves.

Many of these detached histories would, from the circumstances in which they were written and transmitted, acquire considerable authority, and would naturally be

* *Works*, VI. pp. 56, 93, 130, 191.

† Of Jesus' College, Oxford, M.D., who took orders. He died in 1795, aged 80. Besides several other theological works, Dr. Owen published "Remarks on the Four Gospels."

collected by *Mark*, *Luke*, and others, who had a scheme of compiling a regular history. *Matthew* himself, knowing them to be of authority (some of them probably being his own) and having no ambition to distinguish himself as a mere *writer*, might adopt them; and thus it might come to pass that, though these evangelists compiled their histories independently of one another, they would in some places seem to have copied one another, or some common original. At the same time that their differences, both with respect to the arrangement of facts, and several circumstances respecting the facts themselves, abundantly prove that they had never seen each other's writings.

If the Gospel of *Mark* be an abridgement of that of *Matthew*,* it is such an abridgement, I will venture to say, as was never made of any other work. This appears to me to be so obvious, that I wonder how any person can peruse the two histories, and entertain the least suspicion of it.

The hypothesis mentioned above, of the history of Christ having been written originally in detached parts, will help us to account for the same things being sometimes placed together in different Gospels, though they had no natural connexion. For it might happen that they were both originally contained in the same detached memoir, and had been copied from the same by more writers than one. Instances of this kind, which I cannot so well account for in any other way, will occur in some of the ensuing remarks.

If we consider the immediate object of the apostles and evangelists in preaching Christ, namely, to make their hearers good men, to affect mankind with a sense of the truth and greatness of his character, that they might live in the firm belief and expectation of his second coming, we shall not wonder at their not being solicitous about the order of the incidents in their history; for this was a circumstance that had little apparent tendency to produce that effect. In this situation of things, it cannot be expected that persons who had not attended Christ, should ever get a distinct and orderly idea of the particulars of his life, since they who once had it would be in great danger of losing it.

I would observe farther, that the confusion that appears

* See *Michaelis* (*Introd. Lect. Sect. xciii.*), pp. 196—198.

in our copies of the evangelists, with respect to the order of time, may have arisen in part from the *transposition* of paragraphs and sections in their works; nor is it difficult to account for this kind of disorder. The evangelists having had no experience in writing books, and, except *Luke*, perhaps not having at first intended to write the life of their master in so full a manner as they have done, it is not improbable that they might write it, and even suffer it to be copied, in detached parts. Or, when they had completed their first plans, they might, on farther consideration, and more perfect recollection, compose additional parts, and give directions where to insert them in the former copies; which directions may have been mistaken by the persons whose copies have been transmitted to us. Or the writers themselves, when they had made those additions, might not be very attentive to the place in which they inserted them; as nothing that they could imagine to be of any consequence, depended upon it.

That none of the imperfect books are come down to us is no wonder, as every person, who was possessed of a copy, would be desirous to make it complete, and such copies only would be used by transcribers. Nor is it at all difficult to conceive how a copy, not the most perfect in point of *arrangement*, might come to be universally followed, when it was recommended by some higher consideration. Even the early versions may have been various with respect to the arrangement of facts at first, and the order of the prevailing, or standard, copies of the original Greek have been afterwards adopted by the transcribers of them. I would also refer my readers for other causes of transposition, to what *Vigilius* has observed on that subject.*

On all these accounts, whether I be censured as a bold and rash critic or not, I think I may have reason and natural probability on my side, when I venture to transpose some parts of the evangelical history as it stands at present, if by this means the facts have a better connexion.

These observations respect the Gospels of *Matthew* and *John* only. The irregularities of *Mark* and *Luke* may be accounted for without any such hypothesis. It seems highly probable that *Luke* was never himself acquainted with the order of the occurrences, though he took pains to inquire concerning the truth of the facts, and arranged them in the best manner that he could.

* In the *Theol. Repos.* I. pp. 47—50. (P.) See *Appendix*, No. V.

I also pay but little regard to the order of *Matthew's* Gospel, before the history of his own call to attend upon Jesus ; and it is remarkable that, before that event, this evangelist has as few notes of time, or other marks of an orderly narrative as *Luke*. Of this circumstance any person may satisfy himself, who will take the pains to look into his Gospel with that view.

In many cases I am by no means satisfied with the attempts of any of the *harmonists*, that I have seen, to reconcile the different accounts of what was manifestly the same transaction. There appear to me evident marks of the historians having conceived differently concerning the circumstances of them, and I shall be far from concealing any of the observations I have made of this kind. I have observed before, that such variations are favourable to the credibility of the account. *

In some cases, however, though the stories are told in a very different manner, the inconsistencies are only seeming ones, and when examined more closely will be found to vanish. I would gladly have taken some pains on this subject, but that I find I have been more than sufficiently anticipated by my predecessors in the business of harmonizing. There is more room for being original in observing, or even in *acknowledging*, the variations and seeming contradictions in the different evangelists.

Notwithstanding all these sources of confusion and disorder in the evangelical history, it seems very possible for a person, who carefully attends to the nature of the events, and who will collect and compare all the notes of time, and other connexions of particular events, that have been preserved by any of them, to reduce the narrative pretty nearly to its proper order.

In order to this, I have made *Matthew* and *John* my principal guides, and have not departed from the order of events in either of them, unless when the account of one of them is contrary both to those of *Mark* and *Luke*, and also not so probable in itself. But I have made the less difficulty of departing from the order of events in our copies of *Matthew* and *John*, where I thought there was reason to suspect that the parts of their narratives may have been transposed ; and if this treatment will restore *Matthew* or *John* to the order of both *Mark* and *Luke*, I cannot but consider it as an argument in favour of the transposition.

* See *supra*, pp. 9, 10, 12.

SECTION XII.

Observations on the Order of Events before the Mission of the Twelve Apostles.§ 1. *Of the Time when John the Baptist knew Jesus.*

IT is evident, from *John* i. 33, that *John the Baptist* did not know Jesus till he saw the spirit of God descending and remaining upon him, and yet it is equally evident from *Matt.* iii. 13, 14, that *John* did know Jesus when he came to his baptism, and before that descent of the spirit which immediately followed his baptism, mentioned by himself, as well as by *Mark* and *Luke*; and yet none of the evangelists speak of any intercourse that they had together before his baptism.

To reconcile this, some have supposed a descent of the spirit upon Jesus seen by *John* some time before his baptism. But I cannot say that this appears to me to be an easy solution of the difficulty. Besides, one would imagine from the narrative of *Matthew*, who relates this conversation between Jesus and John, that he came directly from Galilee on purpose that he might be baptized, leaving no room for any intervening acquaintance: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him."

I own I do not see how to reconcile the different accounts of the evangelists relating to this circumstance in any manner that gives me entire satisfaction.* That John knew Jesus by some powerful impression upon his mind when he presented himself to be baptized, which Dr. Doddridge supposes,† appears to me not sufficiently reconcileable with what *John* himself says, viz. that he did not know him but by a sign from heaven.

§ 2. ‡ *Of the Time when Jesus cured Peter's Wife's Mother.*

I observed before, that, in that part of the evangelical history which precedes the call of *Matthew*, there are few traces of an orderly connexion of events in his Gospel. Since *Mark*, therefore, has inserted the notes of time belonging to

* See Appendix, No. VI.

† *Fam. Expos.* I. p. 101. (P.)‡ *Essay* IV. Sect. ii. *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 112—122.

that part of the history with remarkable particularity, for a person who is not supposed to have been present, I prefer his order, especially where it is the same with that of *Luke*.

Mark, for example, is so express in saying that Jesus cured Peter's wife's mother on the sabbath after his arrival at Capernaum, and the very same day on which he cured the demoniac in the synagogue, and performed those other astonishing miracles which occasioned his great reputation in those parts, and made it inconvenient to him to continue in the town any longer, that I cannot but adopt his order, in preference to that of *Matthew*; who mentions those events later in the history, but before the time of his own call to attend Jesus.

§ 3. *Of the Time when Jesus visited Nazareth.*

Matthew, after mentioning Jesus's leaving Judea to go into Galilee, says, (iv. 13,) "And leaving Nazareth he came and dwelt in Capernaum;" which seems to imply that Jesus made, at least, a short stay at *Nazareth* before his arrival at *Capernaum*. But it appears to me, that when Jesus left Judea to go into Galilee, after the first passover, he either was not at Nazareth at all, or only just went through it in his way to Cana, from which place it is certain he went to Capernaum.

John makes no mention of Jesus's being at Nazareth, though he is very particular in reciting the events of the first passover, and the several stages and incidents of his progress from Jerusalem to Capernaum at that time, which are omitted by all the other evangelists.

There is a kind of chasm between the 43d and the 44th verse of the fourth *chapter* of *John*, which can only be supplied by supposing the evangelist had mentioned, or at least tacitly referred to Jesus's not choosing to call, or at least not choosing to make any stay, at Nazareth at this time.

John iv. 43: "Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee." But he did not go to Nazareth.

44. "For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country."

45. "Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem; for they also went unto the feast."

46. "So Jesus came again into Cana," &c.

The evangelist's mentioning the *Galileans* receiving Jesus as soon as he came into their country, doth but ill agree with

what Jesus himself observed, in the verse preceding, that a prophet has no honour in his own country, but upon the supposition, that those he first applied to were not his countrymen of *Nazareth*.

Besides, the nobleman of Capernaum, who is said to have set out to meet our Lord as soon as he heard of his arrival in Galilee, went to Cana; so that it is not probable that he had heard of his being, or at least of his intention, or attempt to make any stay at Nazareth. And the cure of this nobleman's son is expressly said by *John* (iv. 54) to have been "the second miracle" that Jesus performed after his arrival in Galilee from Judea; meaning, probably, from the time of his being baptized; and that the first miracle was that at Cana, of turning the water into wine.

The miracles related by *Mark*, (v. 23. &c.,) and which were performed at Capernaum, seem to have been the more immediate occasion of Jesus's great fame in Galilee, and therefore must have been performed soon after his arrival in that country.

It is possible, after all, that by "*leaving Nazareth*," (*καταλιπων Ναζαρετ*,) *Matthew* might mean his having left it, or the family having quitted their habitation there some time before; for the participle being of the *aorist* tense, it ought to have been rendered *and having left Nazareth*.

Or it may mean *passing by Nazareth*, that is, not choosing to call there, he went rather to Capernaum.

Luke, indeed, seems to have imagined that Jesus preached a sabbath in Nazareth, when they attempted his life, before his going to Capernaum; but it is much more probable, from the accounts of both *Matthew* and *Mark*, that the time when Jesus was rejected by the people of Nazareth was some time after he had been at Capernaum; and, upon the whole, it appears to me to have been just before the mission of the *twelve*, and not long before his leaving Galilee to go to the feast of *pentecost*.

Besides, *Luke*'s own account, compared with itself only, has not the marks of perfect consistency; for, according to him, our Lord says to the people of Nazareth, (iv. 23,) "Ye will surely say,—Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in *thine own* country." If this could have been said before he had been at Capernaum, it must have been by way of prophecy concerning what he was to do there, and what they would say to him afterwards, which I think is not an easy interpretation. The mention that *Luke* makes (iv. 31, 32,) of his arrival at Capernaum, after

his rejection at Nazareth, has all the marks of its being his first arrival at that place : “ And he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath-day ; and they were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power.” These were evidently the effects of their first hearing him.

§ 4. *At what Time Jesus entered Capernaum.*

It is not quite certain whether *Jesus* had entered Capernaum before the call of Peter, &c. or not. If he had, it should seem that he could not have made any stay there before that transaction, or have done any thing to make him conspicuous, (except the cure of the nobleman’s son performed at Cana,) for it was on the sabbath after the call of Peter that his very great fame in that place commenced. *Matthew* mentions his *dwelling at Capernaum* before the call of *Peter*, but *Mark* doth not mention his entering that city till after that event. One would naturally conclude from the account of *Mark*, that Jesus, travelling from Cana towards Capernaum, came to some part of the sea-coast, where he met with Peter and the other disciples, and having called them to attend him, entered with them into the city, just before the commencement of the sabbath-day.

§ 5. *Of the Call of Peter, &c. to attend Jesus.*

Luke speaks of the call of *Peter*, &c. as an event subsequent to our Lord’s preaching in Capernaum and the neighbouring towns, and mentions the additional circumstance of the miraculous draught of fishes as preceding their call. Those disciples certainly attended *Jesus* before the sabbath on which he healed Peter’s wife’s mother ; and they can hardly be supposed to have been called in the very same manner (our Lord using the very same words) twice. If the first call, related by *Matthew* and *Mark*, was not effectual, there seems to have been nothing in the second, supposed by some to be related by *Luke*, to make it more so. I therefore suppose that they had only one call to attend Christ after his arrival in Galilee. Indeed, from the manner in which *Luke* relates the circumstances of this call, it is evident that he had no idea of any other call having preceded it. It must be observed that Peter and Andrew, and perhaps James and John also, had been the disciples of Jesus in Judea, and therefore were prepared to obey his call.

§ 6. *Of the Sermon on the Mount.*

The discourse commonly called *the Sermon on the Mount*, related *Matt.* v. vi. and vii. and the discourse related *Luke* vi. 20, &c. called by some *the Sermon on the Plain*, agree in so many circumstances, both in the subject of them, and the incidents attending them, that I have no doubt that they were the same. They both followed our Lord's having retired to a mountain, were addressed to the disciples, in the presence of multitudes assembled from the same places. They begin and end with the same words, and there is no other difference in the contents of them, but that the discourse in *Matthew* is fuller, and has several things omitted by *Luke*. Both the discourses are followed by Jesus's going into Capernaum, and healing the Centurion's servant. Any person, and especially one in the circumstance of a public teacher, may well be supposed to have occasion to repeat the same discourses, but that so many of the same incidents should attend the same discourse is not probable. *Matthew's* saying that Jesus was *sat down* after he had gone up the mountain, and *Luke's* saying that he *stood* on the plain when he healed the sick before the discourse, are no inconsistencies; or, if they were, are of no moment at all, considering that we do not know that either of these historians was present. It is not, however, improbable but that *Matthew*, who lived in that neighbourhood, might be one of the multitude that attended on the occasion, and his relating the discourse so circumstantially and fully is much in favour of this conjecture.

With respect to the circumstances preceding the discourse, they were, perhaps, as follows: Jesus had been up in the mountain, along with his disciples, but seeing the multitudes at the foot of it, he came down among them on the plain, and healed their sick; and then went a little way up the hill, or ascended some eminence at the foot of it, for the advantage of being better heard, while he discoursed to the people still standing on the plain.

It is very possible, as Mr. Whiston supposes,* that the Lord's Prayer might be delivered to the apostles twice, once in the course of the Sermon on the Mount, and afterwards in the circumstances mentioned by *Luke*. I have placed them to-

* See his *Harmony*, p. 127. (P.)

gether for the sake of comparison, especially as there is nothing very particular in the connexion in which *Luke* introduces it.

§ 7. *Where the Leper was cured.*

According to *Luke*, the leprous person, who applied to our Lord after the Sermon on the Mount, was cured in a certain city ; but according to *Matthew*, it was after he came down from the mountain, and before he entered into Capernaum. It probably happened in some other town that he went through, in his way to Capernaum.

§ 8. *Of the Time when Matthew was called to attend Jesus.*

From the time that *Matthew* was called to attend upon our Lord, I think his authority indisputably preferable to that of *Mark* or *Luke*, or even to them both. I have, therefore, adopted his account of the order of events on the day that he was called, the particulars of which he can least of all be supposed ever to have forgotten. He says, (ix. 18,) that it was while Jesus was talking with the disciples of John, after dining at his house, that *Jairus* came to desire him to cure his daughter. But both *Mark* and *Luke* expressly say, that *Jairus* met him with this request as he landed, after having been over the sea, where he had stilled the tempest, and cured the *demoniacs* among the tombs ; and they mention the call of *Matthew* a considerable time before.

§ 9. *Of the Sabbath on which the Disciples plucked the Ears of Corn, &c.*

According to *Luke*, the sabbath on which the disciples plucked the ears of corn, was not the same with that on which Jesus restored the withered hand in the synagogue. But it should seem that *Matthew* and *Mark*, according to the easiest construction of their language, suppose both these events to have happened on the same day.

After reciting the discourse in the corn-fields, *Matthew* says, (xii. 9,) “ And when he was departed thence,” (that is, probably from the corn-fields,) “ he went into their synagogue,” that is, the synagogue belonging to the same Jews with whom he had been discoursing. And *Mark*, after reci-

ing the same discourse, says, (iii. 1,) “ And he entered again into the synagogue,” as if he had been there before on the same day. And, according to *Reland*, the Jews did assemble in their synagogues both morning and evening, on the sabbath, as well as on certain other days. I therefore suppose the two sabbaths mentioned by *Luke* (who certainly was not so well informed as *Matthew*, and probably not so well as *Mark*) to have been only one. The meaning of the word *δευτεροπρωτερον* is so very uncertain, that no interpretation of it can afford a sufficient foundation for the disposition of the fact to which it relates. Mr. Whiston renders it *the first sabbath after the second day of the passover*. But it is not probable that Jesus could have returned from Jerusalem into Galilee so soon; as this sabbath must, in general, have been, within the seven days of the feast.

§ 10. *Of the Discourse concerning the Sin against the Holy Ghost.*

The discourse concerning the sin against the *Holy Ghost* is introduced by *Luke* after his account of the cure of the dumb demoniac, which is related by *Matthew* (ix. 32, &c.) But this evangelist introduces it after the cure of a *demoniac* that was both blind and dumb, mentioned xii. 22, &c. I have followed the order of *Matthew*. It is possible, however, that they may not really differ; as the demoniac mentioned by *Luke* might have been blind as well as dumb, though he has not mentioned that circumstance.

§ 11. *Of the Time when the Mother and Brethren of Jesus inquired for him.*

Luke (viii. 19) represents our Lord's mother and brethren inquiring for him after he had related the parable of the sower, but according to *Matthew* and *Mark*, this inquiry was made after the discourse concerning the sin against the *Holy Ghost*, which the former of these evangelists says was delivered in the former part of the same day. In favour of the probability of the former it may be said, that, being pretty late in the day, his relations might think he would be quite exhausted; and in favour of the latter, that his subject would lead him to speak with peculiar earnestness and vehemence. *Luke* seems not to have supposed that the parable of the sower was delivered from a ship.

§ 12. *Of the Observation concerning the Candle and the Bushel, &c.*

The observation concerning the candle and the bushel, and the admonitions, "Take heed how ye hear," and "To him that hath shall more be given," follow one another in the same order in *Mark* and *Luke*; and are in both introduced after the parable of the sower. In *Mark* they are succeeded by another parable concerning sowing. But in *Matthew* all the above-mentioned particulars make part of the Sermon on the Mount. I make no difficulty of admitting that our Lord might repeat the same observations and admonitions again and again; but I do not think that the place assigned to these in *Mark* and *Luke* is quite natural. But that both these writers, who, I am persuaded, had not seen each other's Gospels till they had composed their own, should arrange these things, that appear to have little or no connexion, in the same order, is rather remarkable. It is not, however, the only instance of the kind that will occur to a person who shall attentively peruse the Gospels. I sometimes think that these seemingly odd coincidences may have arisen from their having seen one another's Gospels, after they had written their own, and adding from the others (but in their own words and manner) what they thought proper; or they might both make use of such notes of detached parts of the history of Jesus, taken from the mouths of the apostles, as might contain them both.

§ 13. *Of what followed the Parable of the Sower.*

Mark says, (iv. 36,) that after Jesus had delivered the parable of the sower, &c. from the ship, "they took him even as he was in the ship;" that at this time he stilled the tempest, and, landing on the other side, cured the *demoniacs*. But, according to *Matthew*, (xiii. 36,) "Jesus—went into the house" after delivering those parables; and the voyage cross the sea, when he cured the demoniacs, had happened before. Both those writers are very express in noting these very different circumstances of this transaction. I have adhered to the account of *Matthew*, as unquestionably an eye-witness.*

* "S. *Mark*," says *Layton*, "is taken to write from the mouth of S. *Peter*," or, "possibly, S. *Barnabas*.—S. *Matthew* was himself both apostle and evangelist, and likely an eye-witness; and there is an old rule, that one eye-witness is better than two ear-witnesses." *Search after Souls*, 1706, p. 209.

SECTION XIII.*

Observations concerning the Time of the Mission of the Twelve.

As *Matthew* makes no mention of any appointment of the *twelve* before the time when they were sent out to preach, and both *Mark* and *Luke* expressly say, that they were called *to be with* our Lord, some time before, with a view to their future mission; I have supplied the defect of *Matthew* from those other evangelists: and I have preferred *Mark's* account of the time of this event to that of *Luke*, because, according to the latter, it preceded the Sermon on the Mount, when, according to *Matthew*, who must have been the best informed in this case, he himself was not called to attend upon Jesus. And as both *Mark* and *Luke* expressly say that he then chose *twelve*, I can hardly think that he chose no more than *eleven* at that time, and afterwards made the number *twelve* by the call of *Matthew*.

It will be no objection to the appointment of the *twelve* at this time, that their mission followed so soon after; for, in fact, all the *twelve*, except *Matthew*, had actually attended Jesus ever since his first appearance in Galilee; and as *Matthew* seems to have resided at Capernaum, it is probable that he had both heard and seen much of Jesus, and particularly that he had heard the Sermon on the Mount, which was delivered in that neighbourhood.

It tends to confirm the supposition of this being the time when the apostles were really appointed, that *the twelve* are never mentioned in the account of any transaction previous to this time of their nomination, though that expression doth occur afterwards, as *Mark* iv. 10.

I have chosen, however, to depart from the authority of *Matthew*, at least from the present order of his Gospel, with respect to the time of the mission of the *twelve*, and the inquiry that *John* made concerning him, which is connected with it.

Matthew places these events immediately after those of the day in which he himself was called, and before the account of the disciples plucking the ears of corn; and consequently a considerable time before our Lord's arrival

* *Essay* IV. Sect. iii. *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 230—235.

at Nazareth, where *Mark* and *Luke* place it. I prefer the order of *Mark* and *Luke* for the following reasons :

1. According to the present order of *Matthew*, the mission of the *twelve* follows the call of Matthew so closely, that it can hardly be supposed, that, simple as the business of their preaching then was, he could be sufficiently instructed for the purpose of his mission. Indeed, according to this order, the other eleven had not been called more than a few days before, and therefore cannot be supposed to have been much better qualified ; whereas, upon my hypothesis, the twelve had been appointed, and had attended upon our Lord much longer.

2. According to the present order of *Matthew's* Gospel, Jesus pronounces the *woe* upon Chorazin and other places in that neighbourhood, (xi. 21,) before he had made one half of his stay in Galilee for that time ; whereas it is more natural to suppose, with *Mark* and *Luke*, that he pronounced it just before his taking leave of Galilee, in order to go to Jerusalem, when the inhabitants of those cities had had more opportunities of seeing his miracles, and hearing his instructions.

Upon the whole, I think it easier to suppose a transposition* of those parts of *Matthew's* Gospel, than that this evangelist should give an account of things so much less natural and probable than *Mark* and *Luke* ; and I think that several arguments may be drawn from the state of *Matthew's* Gospel itself, in favour of a transposition of all that intervenes between *chap.* ix. 34, and the end of the eleventh chapter ; and to conclude, that it was originally placed at the end of the thirteenth chapter.

3. Not the least objection can arise to this transposition from comparing the present connexion of the part to be transposed with the new connexion, but, on the contrary, something in favour of it ; as Jesus's going about teaching in "the cities and villages," (ix. 35,) and sending out his apostles, seems more naturally to follow his being rejected at Nazareth, a country in which he had not preached before, and where he knew that his stay was to be very short, than any thing that is related antecedent to it in the present arrangement.

4. The transposition is more easily accounted for by considering, that the very same words, *at that time*, (ἐν ἐκείνῳ

* See this opinion controverted in "A Vindication of the former Part of St. Matthew's Gospel, from Mr. Whiston's Charge of Dislocations. By Jeremiah Jones, 1713," *passim*. See *supra*, p. 18, Note *.

τῶ καιρῷ,) follow the transposed parts, both in their present situation and in that in which I would place them. There is also something similar in the sense of what precedes the present and the supposed place of these transposed parts. For, as they now stand, they follow the account of the unbelief of the *Pharisees*, who ascribed the miracles of Jesus to the prince of demons; and where I would place them, they would follow the account of the unbelief of his own countrymen, who, because they knew his family, could not conceive how he should be so much distinguished.

5. *Matthew's* account, as it now stands, is such a contradiction to that of *Mark* and *Luke*, as one would choose to avoid, if it could be done without much violence to the text. *Mark* and *Luke* are express in asserting, that the *twelve* returned from their mission on the day that Jesus fled from *Herod*, and just before the feeding of the five thousand. If this were so, it must be contrary to truth to represent the *twelve* as in company with our Lord in any transaction that intervened between their mission and this retreat; but in this interval *Matthew* places the story of the corn-field, and many other transactions, in which the disciples (among whom, I believe, it is universally supposed, in this case, that the *twelve* are included, if they were not principally meant) are expressly said to have been with him.

6. *Matthew* himself seems to mention a return of the *twelve*, as after some separation, at the time of this retreat, though not so particularly as *Mark* and *Luke*. *Matt.* xiv. 5: "And when it was even, the disciples came unto him." And it is the more probable that the return after their mission was intended, since *Matthew* makes no other mention of their return, and it is at the very same time precisely which the other evangelists fix for their return.

7. When Jesus fled from *Herod*, after the death of *John*, not only do *Mark* and *Luke* represent him as being without his disciples, but *Matthew* also seems to suppose him in the same circumstances; for he says, (xiv. 13,) "when Jesus heard of it, HE departed thence, and the people followed HIM." But if the disciples were with him at this time, as *Matthew*, according to the present order of his Gospel, represents, since no separation is mentioned, they must have been with him then also, contrary to the express assertion of the other evangelists.

8. Admitting this transposition, all the neighbouring

events in the history of Jesus have an easy connexion, and all the three evangelists agree in their arrangement of them; all of them representing the cure of the sick of the palsy and the call of *Matthew* as preceding the sabbath on which the disciples plucked the ears of corn; that about this time the *twelve* were appointed, and that upon our Lord's removal to Nazareth, and being rejected there, he went to preach in other cities and villages; and that not having been in their neighbourhood since the commencement of his public ministry, and seeing great multitudes in want of instruction, he sent the *twelve*, two and two, to preach to them. This contributed to spread the fame of Jesus more than ever. *John* at this time sent to inquire concerning him. *Herod* also was alarmed, and probably threatening to seize him and his disciples, who were all in his territories, they all flee out of his dominions into those of his brother Philip, and meet the same day. Upon this supposition, also, the woe pronounced upon Chorazin, &c. is late and seasonable, as was observed before.

Whatever be thought of this proposed transposition, the order of *Mark* and *Luke* is certainly much more natural and probable than the present order of *Matthew*; which, considering that *Matthew* was present in all the transactions, and the other evangelists not, is not easily accounted for.

SECTION XIV.*

Observations on the Order of Events from the Mission of the Twelve Apostles to Jesus' triumphant Entry into Jerusalem.

§ 1. *Of the Duration of John's Imprisonment.*

As *Matthew* connects the inquiry that *John* made concerning Jesus, immediately with the mission of the apostles, and *Mark* (vi. 14) connects the alarm of *Herod* at the miracles of Jesus with the same event, it is probable that *John* was put to death soon after his sending those disciples; and supposing that he lived till their return, he died in the fullest satisfaction concerning the mission of Jesus, that himself or his disciples could want. As *John* was thrown into prison presently after the passover, and was beheaded a little before *pentecost*, it may be concluded that he lay in prison about five weeks.

* *Essay*, IV. Sect. iv. *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 235—242.

§ 2. *Of the Time when Jesus pronounced the Woe on the Cities of Galilee.*

Luke represents our Lord as pronouncing the woe upon *Chorazin*, &c. in the hearing of the seventy disciples, after giving them their instructions; but according to *Matthew*, (xi. 20,) it was pronounced in the hearing of the people, after the discourse concerning John, when the *twelve* were not with him. It is not improbable but that our Lord might have used the same expressions more than once or twice. I have inserted this discourse where I suppose it was first used. *Luke* might introduce it where he has done, as being most pertinent on our Lord's taking his final leave of Galilee.

If it be said that our Lord's exclamation against the cities of Galilee which had not hearkened to his instructions, comes too soon after his arrival in Galilee from Judea, being not more than four weeks; I answer, that, besides that *one* solemn exhortation delivered in each of the places particularly mentioned would sufficiently authorize it, our Lord had been in Galilee before the passover, having at Cana changed the water into wine. Besides, this solemn denunciation might refer to what would be the consequence of *all* his preaching in Galilee, which continued till the feast of tabernacles, that is, all the summer or the best part of the year: and being delivered at this time, it might be kindly intended as an admonition to them, with respect to his future preaching to them.

§ 3. *Whither the Disciples went after the feeding the Five Thousand.*

Mark says, (vi. 45,) that Jesus, after feeding the five thousand, sent the disciples by ship to *Bethsaida*. *John* says, (vi. 17,) it was *towards Capernaum*; but both those places were on the same side of the lake, and not far from one another.

§ 4. *Of Jesus's Journey to Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost.*

Since *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke* omit any mention of Jesus's going to Jerusalem at the feast of *pentecost*, it seems probable that he went alone, and that he made no long stay. In the fifth chapter of *John*, where only we have any account of this journey, it is said that "Jesus went up;" but his disciples are not so much as mentioned in the whole

chapter. Perhaps he did not perform that journey on foot, that he might be as little as possible from Galilee, to which country he seems to have devoted all the first part of the year, viz. from the passover to the feast of tabernacles. His disciples, if they did go to the feast, might travel in the same manner, and perhaps be dispersed among their acquaintance in Jerusalem.

§ 5. *Of the proper Place for the Incidents mentioned by Luke ix. 51,—xviii. 14.*

From *chap.* ix. 51, to xviii. 14, *Luke* seems to relate what passed after Jesus took his final leave of Galilee, in order to reside chiefly in Judea, during the remainder of his ministerial year. This appears to me sufficiently to account for the manner in which this part of his history is introduced, “And it came to pass when the time was come that he should be received up.” If we refer these incidents to the feast of *dedication*, we still depart from the literal sense of the words, (on the most probable supposition, that *αναληψις* means his ascension to the Father, after the completion of his ministry,) and it is impossible to find room for them in the history subsequent to his journey to Jerusalem, at the last passover, when only the time was actually come that he should be received up.

Besides, in this part of his work, *Luke* seems to relate, without much regard to the order of time, a number of instructions and parables, many of which must have been delivered before either the sending out or the return of the *seventy*, mentioned x. 17. This evangelist, however, seems to have imagined, that they were all delivered about the time of his last departure from Galilee to Jerusalem.

Those of these incidents and discourses that cannot be paralleled in *Matthew*, or any other evangelist, I thought I could not do better than throw all together, between the feast of *tabernacles* (at, or soon after which, the *seventy* probably returned) and the feast of *dedication*.

§ 6. *Of the Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven.*

The parables of the mustard seed, and of the leaven, mentioned *Luke* xiii. 18—21, are related in different circumstances by *Matthew*; but as they are mentioned by *Luke* in immediate connexion with the account of our Lord’s travelling towards Jerusalem, it may perhaps be most advisable to repeat them in a complete harmony.

§ 7. *Of the Discourse concerning hating a Man's Father and Mother.*

There is a passage, parallel to that of *Luke* xiv. 26, concerning a man's *hating* "his father and mother," &c. in *Matt.* x. 37. In *Matthew*, however, it is related as spoken to his disciples in private, but in *Luke* to a great multitude.

§ 8. *Of the Discourses delivered beyond Jordan.*

The discourses recorded *Matt.* xix. 3, &c. appear, by their connexion, to have been delivered "beyond Jordan;" and they also appear to have immediately preceded Jesus's last journey to Jerusalem. We must, therefore, suppose the evangelist omitted all that passed between our Lord's leaving this country to his return to it, mentioned by *John* only. From their introduction in *Matthew* and *Mark*, they would seem to have been delivered immediately upon his first arrival in that country "from Galilee;" (*Matt.* xix. 1; *Mark* x. 1;) but as the conclusion of them is immediately connected with the account of his last journey from thence to Jerusalem, every incident of which must have made the deepest impression on their memories, I think it most probable that they were delivered then.

§ 9. *Of the Place where the Infants were brought to Jesus.*

According to *Matthew* and *Mark*, the infants were brought to Jesus, and the question concerning eternal life was asked "beyond Jordan;" but *Luke* (xviii. 15, 31) represents them as happening only in the way to Jerusalem, without mentioning the country beyond Jordan. This evangelist seems not to have imagined that Jesus went thither at all, in his journey from Galilee; for he only mentions his passing through Samaria, though he doth mention his coming to Jericho, which was in his way from beyond Jordan, and not in his way through Samaria.

§ 10. *Of the blind Man cured by Jesus near Jericho.*

The blind man, according to *Luke* xviii. 35, (compared with xix. 1,) was cured before Jesus entered *Jericho*, whereas *Matthew* says expressly, (xx. 29,) that the miracle was performed "as they departed from Jericho." This evangelist, who was present, is most to be depended on.

Pilkington, indeed, maintains that the word *εγγιζειν* may signify *to be near*, as well as *to approach*; and in proof of this he says, that *Luke* uses the same word when he is describing the last entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, when he says, *ηγγιζεν εις Βεθφαγη και Βεθανιαν*, as he was near to *Bethphage and Bethany*; because it is evident, from the course of the history, that Jesus was then going not *towards* but *from* Bethphage and Bethany. But *Luke* says nothing of Jesus having been at Bethphage or Bethany, as the other evangelists do, but describes his triumphant entry into Jerusalem as in immediate connexion with his journey from Jericho. *Luke's* idea, probably, was simply this, that the circumstance he was about to relate happened when Jesus was so far on his way to Jerusalem as to be near Bethphage and Bethany, but before he entered them; and as Jerusalem was at no great distance, it might, probably, be in view from some part of the road, before his arrival at those two villages.

§ 11. *Of the Parable concerning the Ten Servants, and the Ten Talents.*

The parable related in *Luke* xix. 12, concerning the *nobleman* and “his ten servants,” and that in *Matt.* xxv. 14—30, concerning the *talents*, very much resemble one another; but they differ in several respects, and the parable in *Luke* is expressly said to be delivered “because he was nigh to Jerusalem,” (perhaps in the house of *Zaccheus*,) whereas the parable in *Matthew* was delivered after his last departure from the temple.

§ 12. *Of the Lamentation of Jesus over Jerusalem.*

It seems more probable that our Lord's lamentation over Jerusalem was made when he came in view of the city, in his journey from Jericho to Bethany, than during his triumphant entry into it, as *Luke* represents. In coming to Bethany, he must have been very near Jerusalem, the two places being only fourteen furlongs distant from one another.* Besides, so particular a prophecy as our Lord's speech upon this occasion contains, (*Luke* xix. 43, 44,) seems more likely to have been delivered to his particular disciples, than to the

* *Sandys*, in 1611, visited “Bethania, (two miles from Jerusalem,) now a tottered village, inhabited by Arabians.” *Travels*, (ed. 7,) 1673, p. 153.

mixed multitude that attended him in his triumphant entry. As no other evangelist, however, mentions his lamentation, it may seem too bold to set aside the order even of *Luke* upon mere conjecture.

§ 13. *Of the Supper at Bethany.*

According to *Matthew*, (xxvi. 2, 6,) Jesus supped with *Simon* at *Bethany*, (at which time *Mary* anointed him with precious ointment,) “two days” before “the passover,” after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and his discourses in the temple. But *John* (xii. 1, 2) expressly says, that this supper was “six days before the passover,” and also, (xii. 12,) the day before his triumphal entry. In this case we must either make the authority of *Matthew* yield to that of *John*, who is the more circumstantial of the two, or we must transpose the account of *Matthew*; and if the verses that contain this story in *Matthew* (xxvi. 6—13) be considered, they will be found to stand very awkwardly in their present situation, where they interrupt an account of a consultation among the Jews about putting Jesus to death. And the whole story, from *ver.* 6 to 13 inclusive, may very easily be taken out, and *vers.* 5 and 14 will have sufficient connexion. The Gospel of *Mark* will read equally well with a similar parenthesis, viz. from *chap.* xiv. 3 to 9, inclusive.

It is not impossible but that the story might have been written by *Matthew* after the rest of the history was composed; and that, finding his account of the journey from Jericho, and of the entry into Jerusalem, were so connected, (xii. 1,) that the account of this supper could not be inserted between them, (and not being very solicitous about the exact order of his narration,) he, or some other person for him, put it, without much circumspection, where it now stands. *

It is remarkable, however, and unfavourable to this transposition, that this story in *Mark* stands precisely in the same connexion as it doth in *Matthew*. It looks as if *Mark*, when he saw *Matthew's* Gospel, had drawn up an account of the same incident, and inserted it in the same place in his own work.

Or these stories may have happened to be so connected

* See *supra*, p. 84.

in the notes taken from the apostle's preaching, and, being of good authority in other respects, may have gained so much credit, as to have been copied by the evangelists themselves, just as we find them. I hardly know how to account for the remarkable resemblance between the Gospels of *Matthew* and *Mark* in this case, without having recourse to this supposition ; as I am convinced that they had neither of them seen each other's Gospel ; at least, at the time of their beginning to write.

It is possible, however, that *Matthew* and *Mark* might choose to introduce the account of the supper at Bethany, after mentioning the last consultation of the Jews to kill Jesus, and of the assistance they received from Judas, by reciting, in that place, the first occasion of Judas's disgust, though it happened some time before ; a thing which is very common with historians. Upon the whole, I have adhered to the account of *John*. Having seen what the other evangelists had written, it may be presumed that, where he differs from them, it was with design, and in order to be more exact.

In one respect the account of *Matthew* and *Mark* may be thought to be more probable than that of *John*. It is evident that the Jews held frequent consultations about putting Jesus to death, particularly at the time of the resurrection of Lazarus ; but, according to all the evangelists, *Judas* was instigated to betray him, by the affront he conceived to be put upon him, in the observation our Lord made about the precious ointment at this supper at Bethany ; and it is more probable that he should keep to so base a purpose *two days* only, than *six*. But, on the other hand, there would be more time for consultation upon the other supposition, as it is not so probable that so convenient an opportunity as Judas found should have occurred in two days.

Mr. Whiston and other harmonists maintain, that the anointing of our Saviour mentioned by *John* is wholly different from that which is mentioned by *Matthew* and *Mark*. But the different circumstances in these stories, on which he lays so much stress, are either inconsiderable, or not absolutely incompatible.

The anointing mentioned by *John* was of the *feet*, the other of *the head and the whole body*. But both might have been done at the same time. Of the former only *Judas* complained, of the other, *all the disciples*. But the rest might join in his complaint, though less openly. In the

former, Mary served, the other was in the house of Simon the Leper. But Mary, being a neighbour, and perhaps a relation, might serve in the house of Simon.

Mr. Whiston finds a farther difference in the *vindication* and apologies which our Saviour made for the woman. "At the former," he says, "our Saviour desires Judas not to exclaim against her, as if she had spent abundance of ointment on a ceremony. *Against the day of the preparation for my funeral has she kept it*; as if he had said, she has spent but little of it now, she has reserved the main part of it for a fitter time, the day before my delivery to the Jews. At the latter anointing, Mark says, *She has done what she could. She is come beforehand, to anoint my body for the preparation to my funeral*: which words will bear this paraphrase. Because she sees no prospect of an opportunity of embalming my body hereafter, she prevents her intentions as well as she can, by anointing my body thus beforehand, instead of it."*

But certainly *Mary* had no more expectation of the death of Jesus than the other disciples. And it appears to me very extraordinary that, if Judas had been reproved by our Lord, with so much severity, four days before, and this very anointing had even been foretold by him, as Mr. Whiston supposes, the other disciples should have been so very inattentive, as to complain of it a second time, and give our Lord occasion to repeat his rebuke.

The agreement between these histories, Mr. Whiston acknowledges to be so great, that there is a great deal of colour for supposing them to be the same; both anointings being, a few days before the passover, performed by the same woman, *Mary*; in the same place, Bethany; the price of the ointment the very same, three hundred pence; the woman being at both times reproved by others, and being vindicated by our Saviour; most of the company, also, being the same.

Jerusalem is twenty miles from Jericho, so that Jesus could not sup at Bethany and enter in triumph from Jericho the next day. The supper at Bethany, therefore, must intervene between the journey from Jericho and the entry. It is not improbable but that he might spend a day or two in the family of Lazarus at that time, which might give Simon a proper opportunity of inviting him to his house, and making suitable preparation to receive him.

If we suppose that this Simon the Leper was a disciple and friend of Christ, which I think is rather probable, (as another would hardly have risked the displeasure of the ruling Jews so much, as to entertain a man who was now become so exceedingly obnoxious to them,) and he had previous intimation of Jesus's visit to Bethany, and received him the very night of his arrival, we shall be better able to account for the mistake of *Mark*, who places the purging of the temple the day after the triumphant entry; whereas it was the day after his arrival in Bethany, two contiguous dates, one of which he may be supposed to have mistaken for the other.

SECTION XV.*

Observations on the Order of Events from the Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, to the Examination of Jesus before the High-Priests.

§ 1. *Of the Purging of the Temple.*

THE reader will perceive that I have adopted the opinion of Mr. Mann, in supposing that Christ purged the temple only once, and that at the last passover. His reasons are the following:

(1.) All the other evangelists mention this event as taking place at the last passover.

(2.) Such an act of authority is not agreeable to the caution with which our Lord began his public ministry; being accompanied with a public declaration that he was the Son of God, or the *Messiah*; a declaration which, at that time, he avoided making.

(3.) Such an affront to the Jewish priests could not have passed unnoticed or unpunished. And yet some time after it appears, that neither *Herod*, nor many of the people, had heard of Jesus; and six months after this event, (a year or two according to other *Harmonists*,) his brethren bade him go and shew himself at Jerusalem.

(4.) If Jesus had made this declaration, accompanied with so high an act of authority, at Jerusalem, would the chief priests have accused him, as in *Luke* xxiii. 5, of having *begun from Galilee, to pervert the people with his doctrine?*

* *Essay* IV. Sect. v, *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 243—247.

(5.) To these arguments of Mr. Mann,* I would add, that none of the evangelists give the least hint of Jesus having purged the temple more than once, and the accounts of them all contain the very same particulars.

(6.) The verses that contain this account in *John* ii. 13—23, seem to have no business in the place where they now stand. For, take them away, and the parts they now disjoin have an easy connexion; there being a kind of contrast between our Lord's *disciples only, believing on him*, upon seeing *one* miracle at Cana, *ver. 12*, and *many believing on him*, when they saw *many* miracles performed by him at Jerusalem, mentioned *ver. 23*.

Besides, the historian would hardly have chosen to mention its being the passover twice, so near together, as at *vers. 13* and *23*, when there could have been no danger of any person having forgotten or mistaken it.

(7.) The first intimation that our Lord gave the Jews, that he was the Christ, seems to have been at the feast of pentecost, (*John* v. 17,) and it instigated them to seek to slay him. But had he made the same declaration on his purging the temple before, they would hardly have been so much exasperated now on that account.

(8.) No objection will arise to this hypothesis from the attention of the Jews being excited concerning Jesus, and the motives of *Nicodemus's* application to him, on account of the want of this exertion of authority; which is by some supposed almost necessary to account for them. For, besides what *John the Baptist* had done, in bearing witness to Jesus, and pointing him out to the people, and besides the miracle at Cana, (the fame of which doth not, indeed, seem to have spread very far,) our Lord performed *many miracles* at this very passover in Jerusalem, and on the feast-day; as is expressly said, *John* ii. 23, and iv. 45.

Matthew describes Christ's purging the temple as performed on the very day of his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, before he cursed the fig-tree. But, according to *Mark*, (xi. 11,) he only "looked round about upon all things," when he first visited the temple, and, it being even, he went to *Bethany*; from whence returning, in the morning, he cursed the fig-tree, and then, on the second day of his visiting the temple, (*ver. 15*,) he purged it.

It has been said that, though *Mark* only says that "Jesus—looked round about upon all things" on his first visit to

* See *Appendix*, No. VII.

the temple, after his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the word which he makes use of (περιβλεψαμεν) *implies* the ejection of the buyers and sellers, expressing *a look of indignation, reproof, and correction*.* It has, therefore, been supposed that our Lord purged the temple both on that day and the following. But I own that this appears to me to be a harsh construction of the word. Besides, if *Mark* really knew of the first, as well as of the second purging of the temple, and alludes to both, it would have been more natural for him to have written at large the account of the first purging, rather than that of the second.

§ 2. *Of the Prophecy concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem.*

What *Luke* (xvii. 20—37) represents our Lord as saying to the *Pharisees* before he arrived at Jerusalem, concerning the destruction of that city, was not said, according to *Matthew* and *Mark*, till after he had taken his final leave of the temple, just before the last passover, and was then communicated to his disciples only, together with what is contained in the 21st chapter of his Gospel. I hardly think that *Luke's* account of the circumstances of this remarkable prophecy, or of his prophetical declarations on his public entry into Jerusalem, are agreeable to the usual caution and reserve of our Saviour in those respects. However, the sentiments in *Matthew* and *Luke* are so much the same, that in compiling a *harmony*, I should choose to place them together, that they might be more easily compared.

§ 3. *Of Jesus's saying to the Jews, "Ye shall not see me till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord."*

Our Lord's saying to the Jews, "Ye shall not see me until—ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," *Luke* (xiii. 35) supposes to have been pronounced by him in Galilee, before he arrived at Jerusalem; but *Matthew* (xxiii. 39) supposes that these words were pronounced in the temple, after his triumphant entry.

Grotius would translate the words εως αν ειπητε of *Matthew* to signify *till ye could wish to say*, referring to his coming to judgment with power and great glory. I can only say with

* See *Pilkington*, p. 18. (P.)

Dr. Doddridge, [*in loc.*,] I wish the words would bear that sense. He paraphrases them thus: "Till your calamities have taught you eagerly to wish for the *Messiah*, and—as a nation gladly to receive me under that character." For my own part, I am not quite satisfied with any sense that I have seen put upon these words.

§ 4. *Of the Introduction of the Greeks to Jesus, &c.*

The discourses recorded in *John* xii. 20—50, &c. seem not to have been delivered on the day that he first entered the temple, and purged it. The *Greeks* had probably heard of that extraordinary action, and were thereby the more induced to make inquiry concerning him. And the discourses that follow concerning his mission seem very properly to precede those awful parables that relate to the rejection of Christianity by the Jews, and that are recorded in *Matthew* and the other evangelists.

§ 5. *Whether Judas Iscariot partook of the Lord's Supper, considered.**

It appears from *John*, (xiii. 30,) that *Judas* left the company of the rest of the disciples immediately after receiving the sop which Jesus gave him. So that if (as seems to be the opinion of most critics) the eating of the sop, which was dipped in the dish, belonged to the paschal supper, *Judas* did not partake of the Lord's supper which followed it. But it should seem from *Luke*, (xxii. 21,) that *Judas* was with them, both at and after the institution; for immediately after the account of this ordinance, and of Christ's saying, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you;" he adds, "but behold the hand of him that betrays me is with me on the table," &c. So that if we had no other account of this transaction but that of *Luke*, we could not have entertained the least doubt, but that *Judas* received the Lord's supper along with the other apostles.†

In *Mark*, (xiv. 18,) words similar to these last in *Luke*, "Verily I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me," are interposed between the account of eating the passover, and that of the institution of the Lord's

* The whole of this § 5, is here copied *verbatim* from the Author's paper in the *Theol. Repos.* (I. pp. 143—146), entitled "Observations and Queries concerning *Judas Iscariot's* being present, or not present, at the Institution of the Lord's Supper." The Introduction to these *Observations* now forms the paragraphs *supra* p. 9.

† *Chrysostom* "thinks that *Judas* was present" at that time. *Lardner*, V. p. 143.

supper ; so that, according to this writer, *Judas* might or might not have been present at it ; but it rather coincides with the account of *John*, for it cannot be supposed that *Judas* would stay in the company after being so particularly pointed at.

The order of narration is the same in *Matthew* (xxvi. 21) as it is in *Mark*, and as this writer represents *Judas* himself as asking, among the rest, whether he himself was the person that was hinted at, and says that our Lord expressly told him that he was the person ; it is still more difficult to conceive that, according to this account, *Judas* should stay till after the institution of the Lord's supper.

Is it not probable, upon the whole, that *Luke*, who was not present at this scene, but had his relation from other persons, was mistaken in his conception of this transaction, and that he wrote with the idea, which the perusal of his history necessarily conveys to his readers, viz. that *Judas* was present at the celebration of the Lord's supper, and partook of it along with the other disciples ? Do not *Matthew* and *John* clearly suppose the contrary, and as they were themselves present at the transaction, is it not more probable that their account is most to be depended on ?

Some may think it more probable that *Luke*, notwithstanding what has been observed, might have had a just idea of the order of these transactions, but might purposely transpose them, with a view to bring together his accounts of the two questions that were agitated among the apostles at that meeting ; one of which was prior to the celebration of the Lord's supper, viz. *which of them should betray him* ; and the other posterior to the institution, viz. *which of them should be the greatest* ; for after having related the former, he introduces the latter as in connexion with it, *and there was also a strife among them*, &c. But it may be replied, that these two debates had no sort of connexion, (if, indeed, the former can be called a *strife*, or debate,) and therefore did not require to be brought together, especially at the expense of historical truth.

Grotius supposes, that the sop which Jesus gave to *Judas*, did not belong to the paschal supper, but that it was the bread which he brake, and distributed to them in the institution of his own supper, dipping, or putting his hand into a dish that contained it, every time that he gave any of them a piece. So that this great man would, in a manner, reconcile the account of the evangelists upon the

supposition that Judas did receive the bread in the Lord's supper, but not the wine.

Dr. Macknight supposes that *Judas* partook of the Lord's supper, which, he says, might take up a quarter of an hour, though he is said to have gone out immediately (*ευθεως*) after he received the sop belonging to the paschal supper, and though he had been so particularly pointed out as the betrayer of his Master. But it sits easier upon my mind to suppose one of the evangelists to have been mistaken, in a thing of so little consequence, than to reconcile them in this manner.

Mr. Wait* thinks that the Lord's supper was introduced in the middle of a common supper, which he supposes followed the celebration of the paschal supper, and that Judas partook of them all, along with the rest of the disciples. But what reason is there to suppose that the Jews had any other supper besides the paschal lamb itself, no part of which was to be left till the morning? Besides, is not the supposition of an interruption in this supposed common meal, for the sake of instituting the Lord's supper, very unnatural? And what is gained by reconciling the histories of the evangelists at such an expense of probability?

§ 6. *Of the Time when Jesus foretold Peter's Denial of him.*

It is not easy to fix the time when Jesus foretold Peter's denial of him. *Matthew* says, (xxvi. 31,) that it was after they had set out to go to the Mount of Olives; and *Mark* (xiv. 26) relates the facts exactly in the same order. But according to *Luke*, (xxii. 31—39,) the discourse concerning Peter's denial of him was previous to their going to the Mount of Olives; and *John* relates the discourse concerning Peter and several others, before he says, (xiv. 31,) "Arise, let us go hence." *John* is so very circumstantial in relating all the transactions towards the close of our Lord's history, that I prefer his account, though it is not favoured by *Matthew*.

Some suppose that, notwithstanding the words of *John*, last quoted, our Lord did not leave the place where he spake them; because, in xviii. 1, it is said, that "when Jesus had spoken these words," viz. the prayer for his disciples,

* "Mr. Robt. Wait, Minister of Galston," who published "The Gospel History, from the Text of the Four Evangelists, with Explanatory Notes," 8vo. This writer "proceeded upon the supposition, that there were four passovers during our Saviour's public ministry, according to the common opinion." *Mon. Rev.* (1765,) XXXII. pp. 189—191.

&c. "he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron." But I do not see for what purpose the evangelist would have mentioned our Lord's saying, "Arise, let us go hence," if they had not actually gone; and I see no difficulty in supposing, that, as it was night, probably very still, and certainly moon-light, Jesus might discourse as he went along, at least that he might stop at some place without the town, and before he went over the brook.

§ 7. *Of the Day of the Passover in the Passion-week.*

Critics have been exceedingly puzzled to determine whether the Thursday on which Jesus instituted the Lord's supper was the proper day of the Jewish passover; and several circumstances have contributed to make this question of somewhat difficult solution. Had there been no other Gospel besides those of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, there would, I think, have been no doubt but that the passover had been on the Thursday, and that our Lord joined in the celebration of it at the same time with the rest of the Jews. On the other hand, had there been no other Gospel than that of *John*, there would have been as little doubt but that Friday had been the day of the passover; and therefore that our Lord either did not celebrate it at all, or that he anticipated the day appointed by the law. All these writers, however, being present at the transaction, it is impossible that they should have had different ideas of the matter.

John (xii. 1) calls the day before the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, of which *Palm Sunday* is a memorial, (and therefore on this, as well as on other accounts, may be concluded to have been on a Sunday,) "the sixth day before the passover." In relating the transactions of the Thursday, he says not a word about the passover; but on the day following he represents the Jews as refusing to go into Pilate's Judgment-hall, "lest they should defile themselves, but that they might eat the passover." (xviii. 28.) He calls the same day "the preparation of the passover;" (xix. 14;) and he calls the sabbath following a "high day," (xix. 31,) as if it was the feast of unleavened bread, which immediately followed the passover. Lastly, it is thought to favour this supposition, that Jesus would then die at the very time of the celebration of the passover, while the people were killing the paschal lambs in the temple, which would make a beautiful coincidence of the type with the antitype.

On the other hand, *Matthew*, speaking of the events of the Thursday, (xxvi. 17,) calls it "the first day of the feast of unleavened bread." *Mark* useth the same expression, (xiv. 12,) and farther says, that it was the day "when they killed the passover." *Luke* also calls it "the day when the passover must be killed." (xxii. 7.) They likewise all of them expressly say, that on the same day "they made ready the passover; (*Matt.* xxvi. 19; *Mark* xiv. 16; *Luke* xxii. 13;) and on the evening of that day Jesus and the twelve apostles sat down to supper, which, from what went before, it is impossible not to understand of the paschal supper. *Luke* also represents him as saying, during that supper, (xxii. 15, 16,) "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." From which we could not but take it for granted that he had then eaten of the passover for the last time.

At the same time none of the evangelists give the least hint of there being two days on which the passover might be killed, which some have supposed, one for the people of Galilee, and the other for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Besides that the law expressly fixes the killing of the paschal lamb to one particular time, viz. the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month.

I own I am clearly of opinion, that our Lord ate the passover at the precise time appointed by the law, and the same day on which the rest of the Jewish nation celebrated that feast. Indeed, I do not see how he that came [*Matt.* iii. 15] "to fulfil all righteousness" should do otherwise; or if he had, that the Jews, who were so attentive to his conduct, would not have made it an article of their charge against him; especially, considering how ready they were to cavil at him for his neglecting to observe their superstitious ceremonies, those for which they could not allege the authority of Moses or the law: besides, it cannot be supposed that any person would have been suffered to transgress the law so publicly as this must have been done.

Dr. Macknight, without seeming to have attended to these considerations, is very decisively of a contrary opinion; maintaining that our Lord anticipated the legal time for eating the passover. He says, that the lambs for the passover being by far too numerous to be killed by the priests and Levites, in the short space of time appointed for that service by the law, the people were allowed to perform this

service themselves; * and, in proof of this, he rightly quotes two passages of *Philo*; but he did not consider that, though the people were allowed to kill the paschal lambs themselves, they were not allowed to do it when or where they pleased.

We find in *Josephus*, † that it was the universal custom that all the lambs should be killed on the same day, between the hours of nine and eleven, and only in the court of the temple. ‡ And in one of the very passages that Dr. Mac-knight quotes from *Philo*, he overlooks an expression which would have satisfied him that he was quite mistaken in the inference which he drew from it; for in the very passage in which he says the people killed the paschal lambs, without waiting for the priests, he likewise says that they did it *in crowds*, *θύουσι πανδημει αὐτῶν ἑκάστος τῆς ἱερῆς αὐτῶν ἐκ ἀναμνόντες*: § and *Josephus* shews how a computation was made of the number of people assembled in Jerusalem at the time of the passover, by the number of lambs which were killed between the hours of nine and eleven, || which would have been no *datum* at all for this conclusion, if every person had been allowed to kill his lamb privately, when and where he pleased, without any public inspection. This would also have been contrary to the most fundamental principles of the Jewish ritual, in which every thing was public, in order to guard against different customs and abuses.

I therefore take it for granted, that the account of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, is strictly just, and that we have misunderstood those expressions in the Gospel of *John* which have led many to entertain a different opinion. In numbering the days before the passover, I suppose him to have reckoned from the 15th day of the month, which, indeed, was properly *the feast-day*, being the feast of unleavened bread, and a day of holy convocation; and it must have been lest they should defile themselves on that day, that the Jews refrained from going into the Roman Judgment-hall; though I own I should not have expected that he would have expressed this by saying, (xviii. 28,) “that they might eat the passover.”

It is true that the Friday is called “the day of the preparation,” *Matt.* xxvii. 62; *Luke* xxiii. 54; *John* xix. 42;

* *Harmony*, p. 94. (P.)

† *War*, B. vi. Ch. ix. Sect. iii.

‡ See also Reland's *Jewish Antiquities*, p. 269. (P.)

§ *De Decalogo*, p. 766. (P.)

|| *De Bello Judaico*, L. vi. C. ix. Sect. iii. (P.)

but neither in the law of Moses, nor in any other authentic account of the passover, is there any mention of such a day preceding the fourteenth of *Nisan*; and it appears from *Mark* xv. 42, that the word *παρασκευη* is of the same meaning with *προσαββατον*: “And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath.” When, therefore, the Friday is called, (*John* xix. 14,) “the preparation of the passover,” the meaning can only be, that it was that preparation for the sabbath which fell in the paschal week.

Mr. Mann accounts for the difference between John and the rest of the evangelists, by supposing, with *Scaliger*,* that it was “the custom with the Jewish priests,—long before the ruin of the second temple,” to carry “over the new moon of *Tisri*, or *Nisan*,” in certain cases, “to the day following, to prevent the burden of two holidays coming together;” but that this rule being, in the time of our Saviour, of no long standing, was not universally observed; so that he kept the passover on the Thursday, according to the law of Moses, and the Jews, according to their own rule, on the day following.† But I believe no instance can be produced of any order of the Jewish high-priests, respecting the regulation of the year and of the festivals, not being universally observed, or of any difference of customs among the Jews on such a ground.

§ 8. *Of the Transactions of the Wednesday in the Passion-week.*

There is no particular transaction of our Lord’s recorded for the *Wednesday* of the passion-week. For *Matthew* expressly says, that all the discourses in the temple and about it were finished two days before the passover, which he always places on the Thursday. It should seem, however, that the final agreement between the high-priests and *Judas* was made on the Wednesday. For this transaction is related by *Matthew* and *Mark* immediately after their account of our Lord’s discourses above-mentioned, and before the events of the Thursday following. *Matt.* xxvi. 14; *Mark* xiv. 10. Tradition also favours this supposition; for Wednesday is said to have been an ancient fast, in commemoration of the treachery of *Judas*.‡ *Luke* relates this transaction as immediately preceding the events of the Thursday. *Luke* xxii. 3—6.

* *Can. Isog.* pp. 228, 309. *Mann.*

† See his *Dissertation*, pp. 198, 199. (*P.*)

‡ See *Pilkington.* (*P.*)

§ 9. *Of the Supper at which Jesus washed his Disciples' Feet.*

Pilkington and many other harmonists contend, that the supper at which our Lord washed his disciples' feet was not the same with that on which he ate the passover, but one preceding it, at Bethany, and probably the same with that on which Mary anointed him. But it is evident from *John*, that our Lord foretold *Peter's* denial of him on the same night on which he washed his disciples' feet; so that we are obliged to suppose that our Lord foretold this event twice, and nearly in the same words; which, accordingly, some suppose. But I think it extremely improbable, that, after the very solemn manner in which our Lord had foretold this event once, Peter should deliberately give him a second occasion of doing it, by repeating the same solemn assurances of his fidelity and attachment the day following.

It is evident that there is no place in the Gospel of John, in which we can suppose that any thing intervened between the supper on which our Lord washed his disciples' feet, and the scene in the garden, but at the end of the fourteenth chapter, where it is said, "Arise, let us go hence," which is therefore supposed by some to have been spoken at Bethany, and that what follows was delivered after the passover the next day. But these words might have been pronounced by our Lord upon their rising from the table only. And this is the more natural supposition, as there is no other mark of the time of the ensuing discourse, which is introduced exactly as it would have been on the supposition of their rising from the table, and our Lord's continuing the discourse either in the same house, or in the open air, on their way into the garden. The very next words after "arise, let us go hence," are "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman," &c. Whereas *John* is particularly careful to note the time and place of all the events and discourses that he relates.

It is said * that the construction which the disciples put upon our Lord's saying to *Judas*, "What thou doest, do quickly," viz. that he was intimating to him to *buy what they needed against the feast*, implies, that some time must have intervened between that supper and the passover. But the feast continued a whole week.

It is also alleged that it could not properly have been said,

* *Pilkington*, p. 50. (P.)

that *from this time Judas sought an opportunity how he might conveniently betray Jesus, in the absence of the multitude*, unless it had been on some day before the Thursday. But this is not said by *John*, but by the other evangelists, who date the treacherous design of Judas from the time that our Lord reproved him for his censure of Mary. *John* only says, that “after the sop Satan entered into him,” and that “when he had received it he went out, it being then night.” But it might have been said more emphatically at this time, though, in fact, Satan or his base designs had entered into him before.

SECTION XVI.*

Observations on the Order of Events from the Examination of Jesus before the High-priest, to the Conclusion of the History.

§ 1. *Of the Insults which Jesus received at the House of the High-priest.*

LUKE speaks of the denial of *Peter*, and the insults which Jesus received at the house of the high-priest, as preceding the assembling of the chief priests to examine him, and his confession that he was the Christ. This assembling and examination, he says, were “as soon as it was day” (xxii. 66). *Matthew* expressly says, that the insults were after his examination (xxvi. 67). Indeed, both *Matthew* (xxvii. 1) and *Mark* (xv. 1) speak of an assembly of the chief priests when it was day; but this was after his examination, and was only for the purpose of consulting among themselves in what manner they should get their sentence put in execution; and therefore they make no mention of Jesus being brought before them at that time. The resolution which they came to at this second meeting, was, to carry Jesus bound to Pilate, which they did immediately.

§ 2. *Of the Circumstances attending Peter's Denial of Jesus.*

There is a pretty considerable variation in the accounts which the different evangelists give of the circumstances attending Peter's denial of Jesus. According to *Matthew*,

* *Theol. Repos.* III. pp. 462—469.

(xxvi. 34,) our Lord told Peter, that *before the cock crew, he should deny him thrice*. And he represents him as denying him three times distinctly, before the cock crew; the two first times at the interrogation of two different women, and lastly, of those who were *standing by*. xxvi. 69—75.

Mark says, (xiv. 13,) that our Lord told Peter, that *before the cock crew twice, he should deny him thrice*. And he represents the first cock crowing after the first denial. The two first denials, according to this evangelist, were occasioned by the interrogations of the same woman, and the third, by that of the standers-by. xiv. 66—72.

Luke, like *Matthew*, says, (xxii. 34,) that Jesus told Peter, that *before the cock crew, he should deny him thrice*; but he represents the first denial only as occasioned by the interrogation of a woman, and the second and third at that of two different men. He also mentions the circumstance of our Lord's *looking at Peter* after the crowing of the cock, as if that alone had not been sufficient to awaken his recollection. xxii. 61, 62.

John says, (xiii. 38,) that Jesus told Peter, that *before the cock crew, he should deny him thrice*; and he says, that the first denial was at the interrogation of a woman who kept the door, on his entrance (for it is mentioned before the fire is spoken of); the second time, at that of several persons who were warming themselves; and the third time at that of a relation of the man whose ear was cut off, and who alleged that he had seen Peter in the garden.

It seems probable that *Matthew* and *John*, who heard Jesus, and who were present when Jesus foretold the denial of *Peter*, have given the true account with respect to the number of cock-crowings, and that the second crowing of the cock was an addition, which the opposition of *twice* and *thrice* might, perhaps, recommend to those persons from whom *Mark* (who was not present) had his account. *Matthew* and *John*, however, differ with respect to the persons who interrogated Peter. *Matthew* also mentions no interrogation till after the insults which Jesus met with; and yet having probably heard something of his being interrogated at the door, he speaks of his going to the door afterwards, and being then interrogated the second time.

The account of *John*, who was in the house at the time, may certainly be depended upon as the most exact, especially as he had seen those of the other evangelists. *John* makes no mention of Jesus's *looking on Peter*.

§ 3. *Of the Circumstances which attended the Resurrection of Jesus.*

Much has been written by several modern divines, on the harmony of the different accounts which are given by the four evangelists, of the circumstances attending the resurrection of Jesus ; and I believe it may be *possible* to draw up a narrative which shall comprise all the different accounts, and be consistent with itself ; but to me it is evident, that if the different writers had had exactly the same ideas of the circumstances attending that event, they would not have written as they have done concerning it.

Matthew says, (xxviii. 1—10,) that “ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary ” went, at the break of day, “ to see the sepulchre,” but an angel had rolled away the stone, “ and sat upon it.” The angel bade them tell the disciples that Jesus was risen from the dead ; and as they were making haste to deliver that message, Jesus himself appeared to them, and they fell down and held him by the feet ; but he bade them go and tell his disciples to meet him in Galilee.

Mark says, (xvi. 1—11,) that at sun-rise, “ Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome,” going to anoint the body of Jesus, found the sepulchre open ; and going in, saw a young man sitting on the right hand, who told them that Jesus was risen, and bade them tell his disciples to meet him in Galilee. Afterwards this evangelist informs us that Jesus, having risen early in the morning, appeared “ first to Mary Magdalene,” who went and informed the disciples, but was not believed by them.

Luke says, (xxiii. 55, 56, xxiv. 1—12,) that many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee, and others with them, going with spices, found the stone rolled away ; and going into the sepulchre, found not the body of Jesus ; and that while they were in doubt, two men stood by them, who said that he was risen ; and that they went and told the disciples, who did not believe them ; but that *Peter* ran to the sepulchre, and seeing the grave-clothes, wondered very much.

John, who is the most circumstantial in his relation, says, (xx. 1, &c.) that while it was yet dark, Mary Magdalene went to the sepulchre ; and upon seeing the stone taken away, ran to inform Peter and John. Upon this, these two disciples ran to the place, and finding the clothes only, returned ; but that Mary, who stood without, and wept, on looking into the sepulchre, saw two angels, sitting one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body had lain ; and

while she was asking them concerning the body, Jesus himself appeared to her, and bade her go and tell his disciples that he was risen.

To me it appears not very easy to suppose that these different accounts were written by persons who had precisely the same ideas of the events, and of the order of them ; but the variations are such, that it is not worth the while of any friend of Christianity to take pains to reconcile them. After considering and comparing all these accounts, my own ideas of the affair are as follow :

The stone was rolled away from the sepulchre, Jesus rose, and the guard were dispersed, some time before day-break. Presently after, the women came with their spices, intending to embalm the body ; but recollecting that the stone was too large for them to remove, they were at a loss what to do ; when they were surprised to find it already rolled away, and the body gone. Being exceedingly astonished at this, they dispersed themselves to different places, to inform the disciples of what they had seen ; for it is not at all probable, that, in their present state of fear and consternation, they were all together. *Mary Magdalene* went to *Peter* and *John*, who immediately ran to the sepulchre, followed by *Mary* herself ; but staying longer than they did, and looking into the sepulchre after they were gone, she saw first the two angels, and then Jesus himself.

Supposing the other women not to have quitted the garden, but to have waited for the return of *Mary Magdalene*, we may allow that they also were favoured with an appearance of Jesus to them, presently after the appearance to *Mary*, and before they had quitted the garden, when they were all permitted to embrace his feet, according to *Matthew*.

By this time, it is probable, that most of his disciples were got together, in consequence of the news they had heard, when *Mary* joined them, and informed them that she had seen Jesus himself ; but they gave no credit to her. Some time the same day, when the disciples were separated, Jesus appeared to *Peter* alone, (*Luke* xxiv. 34,) who upon this, probably assembled as many of the disciples as he could, to inform them of it. After the appearance to *Peter*, our Lord joined the two disciples who were going to *Emmaus*, (*Luke* xxiv. 13,) and discovered himself to them ; upon which they immediately returned to Jerusalem, and going to the place where the disciples were assembled, were informed by them that Jesus had appeared to *Peter* ; and while they were giving an account of the manner in which he had made himself

known to them also, Jesus himself appeared to them, and ate with them. *Thomas* being informed of this, would not believe ; but that day seven-night, Jesus appeared to them when *Thomas* was present, and was fully satisfied. After this, all the disciples went to Galilee, where Jesus was seen by them, and the other disciples, many of whom resided in Galilee ; and, returning to Jerusalem, he ascended to heaven in the presence of many of them, from the Mount of Olives.

I take it for granted, that *John* would not have given so circumstantial an account as he has done of the manner in which the resurrection was first notified, if it had not been for the sake of being more exact than the other evangelists had been. I have, therefore, followed his account, and think that the variations in the other evangelists which cannot be easily reconciled with it, must be ascribed to their being misinformed and mistaken concerning them. But they are things of no moment ; so that the variations with respect to them, serve to make the general account of the resurrection the more, and not the less credible.

All the evangelists, except *John*, represent the women as having seen the vision of angels before any of them had been with the apostles, but the account which *John* gives, makes the discovery of the resurrection more gradual and pleasing. It is also to be observed, that the manner in which they describe this vision is remarkably different.

The reader will find much light thrown upon the history of the resurrection in a quarto pamphlet of Dr. Lardner's, entitled " Observations on Dr. Macknight's Harmony of the Four Gospels, so far as relates to the History of our Saviour's Resurrection." * Dr. Macknight has made such a number of arbitrary and improbable suppositions relating to this part of the gospel history, that instead of succeeding in his attempts to reconcile the different accounts of it, the unwarrantable liberties he has taken with it do, as Dr. Lardner observes, exceedingly *perplex* and *pervert the history*, which " must be of bad consequence. What history," he observes, " can stand before such treatment?" † My account of the order of the events agrees very nearly with that of Dr. Lardner, though it was written without consulting his. We differ in this, that he thinks all the writers had precisely the same ideas of the order of the events, which to me does not appear probable.

* "In a Letter to the Author," 1764, *Works*, XI. pp. 359—400.

† *Ibid.* p. 371.

SECTION XVII. *

A Computation of the Time that was necessary for the Purpose of Christ's Ministry.

THE greatest objection that can be made to the hypothesis of our Lord's ministry having continued no longer than a year, or a year and a few months, arises from the supposed impossibility of crowding the business of the evangelical history into so small a compass. The more effectually to answer this objection, I shall briefly go over the whole history of Christ, and collect all the *notes of time* that I can find in it. This I did at first, in order to judge of the *possibility* of the scheme; but the result of my observations convinced me of the great *probability* of it, independent of all other arguments. For when I found that every thing related of the public ministry of Christ fell with ease within these limits, I was sensible that more time would have been both unnecessary and an incumbrance to the scheme. Whether this kind of evidence will have the same weight with my reader, I cannot tell. I shall lay before him the result of my observations, that he may judge for himself.

We have no date from the history of the gospel to determine the time of the year when *John* began to preach, or when Jesus was baptized. *Jerome*, *Eusebius*, and *Origen* fix the time of Christ's baptism to the seventh of January, which seems to have been an old tradition.† *Pilkington* supposes that *John* began his ministry in September, when the wilderness could furnish neither locusts nor wild honey.

It can hardly be supposed, for the reasons given in a preceding Section, that after the first passover (which, I suppose, to have fallen on Tuesday the 30th of March, that year,) Jesus spent more than one sabbath in Judea, before his arrival in Galilee. Where he spent that sabbath (the 3d of April) is not said; but as all the known events that intervened between this sabbath and that which he spent at *Capernaum*, are his journey through Samaria, two days' stay at *Sychar*, (which, agreeably to a mode of speaking usual in the Scriptures, may, perhaps, only mean part of two days, or little more than a night,) and his interview with the nobleman at *Cana*, we may well suppose that this last mentioned was the 10th, and that he arrived at that place on the day before, when he called *Peter* and *John*, &c.

* *Essay V. Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 313—327.

† See *Pilkington's Chronological Dissertations*, No. LV. Notes, p. 9. (P.)

This was the sabbath on which Jesus healed the demoniac in the synagogue, and Peter's wife's mother at Peter's own house, with many other sick persons; which gave rise to his very great fame in that place, (*Mark* i. 28,) so that, in order to avoid the prodigious concourse of people that crowded to him upon the occasion, he retired early the next morning (Sunday the 11th) into the neighbouring desert, whither his disciples resorted to him, and from whence he visited the places in that district.

On this excursion from *Capernaum*, it appears from *Mark* ii. 1, that he was absent only *a few days*. Now if we admit these few days to be a week; which is more than sufficient, considering that we have no account of any intervening events, except the *Sermon on the Mount*, and the cure of the leper, we may fix his return for the Sunday following, or April the 18th. Allowing one day more, it will be Monday, April the 19th.

The day on which the disciples plucked the ears of corn, I suppose to have been the next sabbath, as the transactions will easily admit of it; for, excepting the time that was taken up in crossing the sea of *Tiberias*, and returning to *Capernaum*, we have no events, but what are expressly confined to two or three days.

Immediately on his entering *Capernaum*, he healed the Centurion's servant, and the very *next day*, (*Luke* vii. 11,) Tuesday the 20th, he was at *Nain*, where he raised the widow's son. I can hardly help thinking, but that Jesus did not perform this journey on foot; for it seems to have been about twenty miles, which is rather too far for him to have walked conveniently. It is an objection, however, to this supposition, that "many of Jesus's disciples and much people" are said (*Luke* vii. 11) to have gone "with him." There is a great difference, indeed, in the maps of the Holy Land, with respect to the situation of *Nain*. In some of them it is placed to the *East*, and in some to the *West* of *Nazareth*; though most of them place it to the *East*. According to both it was about the same distance from *Capernaum*; but according to the latter it was more conveniently situated for crossing the sea to *Gadara*; being about half-way between *Nazareth* and the southern part of the sea of *Galilee*.

I conclude, that very little time elapsed between Jesus's return to *Capernaum*, and his crossing the sea to *Gadara*, because *Matthew* connects these two events together, saying, (viii. 18,) that *when he saw great multitudes, he went to the*

other side of the sea. Admitting that he set out from *Nain* early the next morning (Wednesday the 21st) in the same mode of travelling in which he had come to *Nain*, he might easily have got to the other side of the sea before night. The storm they met with may as well be supposed to have quickened, as to have retarded their passage ; and probably it was not of long continuance, as they would naturally awake Jesus on the first apprehension of danger. That sea is but about five or six miles over in that place, so that the navigation of it could not, in general, exceed an hour.

Considering the reason why Jesus had just left *Capernaum*, viz. the crowd, it is not probable that he would stay long in *Nain*, after so illustrious a miracle as he had performed in that place. It is expressly said, (*Luke* vii. 12,) that “much people of the city” attended the funeral, and, (*ver.* 17,) that this miracle occasioned “a rumour of him” to go “throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.”

On the other side of the sea, it is evident that our Lord made but little stay. The *demoniac* (*Mark* v. 2) “met him immediately” on his landing, and as soon as ever the cure was performed, and the swine drowned, in consequence of it, (which events followed close upon one another, *Mark* v. 13,) the people of the country urged him “to depart.”

Upon the supposition that he landed in the evening, he might set sail again about sun-set ; and as the moon was about the last quarter, there would be no difficulty in reaching *Capernaum* before morning, (Thursday the 22d,) the distance being only twelve or fifteen miles. So that the events of the busy day on which he called *Matthew*, might happen on that very day ; and then we shall be at a loss how to dispose of Jesus till the sabbath following, on which the disciples plucked the ears of corn. If, therefore, any of the preceding events seem to be too crowded, we may suppose that he arrived at *Capernaum* on the Friday.

I see no reason to suppose, with some, that the entertainment which *Matthew* made for Jesus, mentioned *Matt.* ix. 10, and *Luke* v. 29, was on a different day from that on which that apostle was called. The very next words that follow the account of *Matthew's* rising and following Jesus, are, “And it came to pass as Jesus sat at meat in the house.” *Luke*, indeed, supposes, that *Matthew* made a *great feast* on purpose for *him* ; but it might be a day on which he expected some of his friends, and was already prepared ; or, supposing that this feast was made on purpose to entertain

Jesus, we have room enough for it. Our Lord might land at *Capernaum* early in the morning, and, after healing the sick of the palsy, be walking by the sea-side, and call *Matthew* long before noon; so that before evening there was time enough to make any entertainment, and invite his friends. During that entertainment was the discourse with the disciples of *John*, and during that discourse *Jairus* waited upon Jesus; and the raising of his daughter, healing the woman who had the bloody issue by the way, giving sight to two blind men, and curing a demoniac, comprise all the remaining events of the day; and they are no more than might easily fall within the compass of a day. Admitting, however, that these events took up two days, it appears that we have even three days for them.

As to *Matthew's accounts*, which have been urged by some; they might, for any thing that we know, have been settled in an hour. Perhaps, having just made his payments, they required no settling at all; or that business might have been done by means of a friend. The story is so told, that we cannot but suppose that *Matthew* became a follower of Jesus from the very day on which he was called. The sons of *Zebedee* immediately left their father, their nets, and every thing, and followed Jesus forthwith; and why should we allow *Matthew* any longer respite?

If, with *Luke*, we suppose the sabbath on which Jesus healed the man who had the withered hand, not to have been the same with that on which the disciples plucked the ears of corn, (though I think it most probable that they were the same,)* we shall not be in the least embarrassed with respect to this *harmony*; for as this evangelist mentions no events as happening between these sabbaths, and gives no note whereby we can fix the time of them, we may suppose that they were mentioned in the same place, because the transactions in them were similar, and not because they were contiguous. We may, therefore, suppose that one of the sabbaths was the 17th of April, the 8th or 15th of May, or, indeed, any sabbath during our Lord's stay in Galilee.

If we consider the events that passed between this sabbath on which the disciples plucked the ears of corn, and on which Jesus healed the man with the withered hand, and the sabbath on which he was rejected at *Nazareth*, we shall not see the least reason to suppose that any other intervened between them; for we have no more *transactions* than are

* See *supra*, pp. 80, 81. (P.)

expressly limited to one day, and *hints* of what might require two or three.

Having incurred the violent resentment of the Pharisees, by the transactions of the last-mentioned sabbath, Jesus retired into a desert place, whither the multitudes followed him, "and he healed them." *Matt.* xii. 15. At this time, also, he set apart the twelve apostles. *Mark* iii. 13, 14.

Admitting that these things took up Sunday and Monday, Tuesday the 27th of May, will be the day on which he cured the blind and dumb *demoniac*, and held the discourse by the sea-side, as recited in the preceding view of the *Harmony*. * On Thursday, therefore, the 29th, he might set out for Nazareth, and reach it the next day.

From the sabbath on which he was rejected at *Nazareth*, May 1, to the feast of *pentecost*, which was on Thursday, May the 20th, we have two weeks and five days, and no account of any transactions that took up more than three or four days, except the mission of the *twelve*, which, as I have shewn, † could not well take up much more than a week.

Supposing the mission to have been on Sunday the 2nd of May, the return may be fixed for Sunday the 9th; and on the day following, Monday the 10th, Jesus might feed the five thousand, be seen walking on the sea that night, and hold the discourse concerning bread the day following, Tuesday the 11th.

As the moon changed on the 13th of this month, she would be then in her last quarter, and consequently give light in the morning, by which Jesus might be seen at a distance from the ship. But I do not see that the history necessarily requires the light of the moon. It is not said at what distance Jesus was seen from the ship, and it being then "the fourth," or last "watch of the night," (*Matt.* xiv. 25,) it must have been near break of day. Besides, the stars give more light in the clear atmosphere of *Judea*, than they generally do with us; and, except in the rainy season, the nights are seldom cloudy, and it was harvest time.

Upon this supposition we shall be at liberty to defer the return of the *twelve* till Thursday the 13th, and this will be the more convenient, as it will allow just sufficient time for feeding the five thousand, and the discourse about bread, which, being delivered in the synagogue of *Capernaum*, was probably on the sabbath following.

If I have acquitted myself to the satisfaction of my reader

* *Supra*, p. 66.

† *Ibid.* p. 59. (P.)

in the computation of time for the preceding part of the history, it must, I imagine, be allowed, that every difficulty attending the hypothesis I am endeavouring to support, is surmounted, as far as it depends upon this computation; since, in the remainder of the history, we have fewer facts, and much more time for them. Indeed, it might be expected, that the sacred historians would be more circumstantial in their account of the first part of our Lord's ministry. The events of it being all new and extraordinary, would make a deep impression on their minds; and each of them, having related an event or discourse of any kind, would have little inducement to relate another that was similar to it, and that occurred later in the history. But the last events in the history, being much more striking and important than the rest, are related with great particularity by them all.

From the feast of *pentecost* to the feast of *tabernacles*, which was on Friday the 24th of September that year, was eighteen weeks; whereas the events belonging to this interval cannot be supposed to have taken up one half of them.

It doth not appear that Jesus made any long stay at Jerusalem at this feast. The reason that is given why he did not choose to *walk in Judea* at that time was, that "the Jews sought to kill him;" and that resolution was formed on the first sabbath after the feast, when he cured the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda.

The first event upon record after Jesus's return to Galilee is his discourse concerning traditions. Supposing this to have been in the neighbourhood of *Capernaum*, his journey from thence to the coasts of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, being about 60 miles, might take a fortnight or three weeks. As he made this journey in a private manner, which we may infer from his hope of not being known when he "entered into a house," at the end of his journey, *Mark* vii. 24, (an expectation which he could not have formed, if he had travelled by slow stages, preaching and working miracles all the way,) and as he is not said to have done any thing in that country, besides curing the daughter of the *Syrophœnician* woman, we may conclude that the whole excursion could not have taken up more than the time above-mentioned.

After his return we find him travelling through the coasts of *Decapolis*, on the eastern shore of the sea of *Tiberias*, where he cured one man who had an impediment in his speech, and another who was blind. As this whole territory did not exceed twenty miles in length, we may allow a week

or a fortnight for this progress, at the end of which, being in a desert place, where the multitude had been with him "three days," *Mark* viii. 2, (that is, probably two nights and part of three days,) he again fed them by a miracle.

Immediately after this event, Jesus went by ship to the "parts of Dalmanutha," (*Mark* viii. 10,) or "the coasts of Magdala," (*Matt.* xv. 39,) on the same side of the sea, where he discoursed with the Pharisees concerning the sign from heaven. After this he crossed the sea, and at *Bethsaida* cured a blind man. For these events a week may certainly be deemed more than sufficient.

The next journey we have an account of is to *Cæsarea Philippi*, about forty miles; when, on the way, he began to foretell his sufferings, which is expressly said to have been "six days" before the transfiguration, (*Matt.* xvii. 1,) on a mountain near *Capernaum*. If we allow a fortnight for this excursion, we shall have found events for no more than six or eight of the seventeen weeks that he was in Galilee at this time, allowing one week for his journey to and from Jerusalem. For, from the transfiguration to our Lord's taking his final leave of Galilee, nothing is said to have happened but the cure of the demoniacal child at the foot of the mount, and some discourses at Capernaum in that neighbourhood. However, as Jesus did not set out for this feast till after "his brethren were gone up," (*John* vii. 10,) and did not arrive at Jerusalem till about the middle of it, *ver.* 14, (going, perhaps, for the greater privacy, by the country "beyond Jordan," *Matt.* xix. 1,) we may allow a few days more for his stay in Galilee at this time.

A very few days might suffice for all that passed at Jerusalem at the feast of *tabernacles*, as it consisted chiefly of discourses with the Jews, related in the eighth and ninth chapters of *John*.

What passed between this feast and the feast of *dedication*, nine weeks afterwards, we are no where informed; so that, to fill up this chasm, I have been obliged to insert in this place all those discourses and incidents mentioned by *Luke*, which I did not know how to dispose of better. It is probable, that the manner in which our Lord passed his time in *Judea* was so similar to the preceding part of his ministry in *Galilee*, that the evangelists, who all appear to have studied conciseness, thought it superfluous to relate the particulars. There is, however, an absolute silence in all of them from this time, till within a few weeks before our Lord's

death ; except that *John* only mentions a few particulars of what passed at the feast of *dedication*, (*chap. x.*) and the resurrection of *Lazarus*.

All that is said to have passed between the feast of *dedication* and the last passover, an interval of more than sixteen weeks, are the discourses beyond Jordan, the journey from thence to raise Lazarus, the retreat to Ephraim, and the last journey through Jericho to Jerusalem ; all which can hardly be supposed to have taken up four weeks.

It is by no means necessary for me to go over the remainder of the history, as all *harmonists* are agreed with respect to the time in which it was comprised, though they differ in their arrangement of particular facts. Not but that a review of the history of the last week before our Lord's death, would be favourable to the hypothesis I am endeavouring to support, as it would exhibit a scene of much more business than I have had occasion to bring into any two weeks before.

It certainly appears, upon the whole, that one year was abundantly sufficient for all the events recorded in the evangelical history. No person, reading *Matthew*, *Mark*, or *Luke*, could possibly have imagined that they took up more ; and every thing is perfectly easy in *John*, admitting the transposition of one chapter, the present connexion of which evidently shows it to be out of its proper place ; and the interpolation of the word *passover* before *feast of the Jews* ; a mistake so easy, in some early transcriber, (by taking into the text a marginal illustration of some person's, who rashly supposed the *passover* was the feast referred to,) and so much like other mistakes that are generally supposed to have been made, since these books came from the hands of the original writers, that a much smaller advantage than is here proposed by it would justify us in admitting it. In fact, other critics have admitted it for different, and less weighty reasons. There are persons, however, who would not alter the present copies of the *New Testament*, though they were obliged to suppose that the public ministry of Christ lasted *forty* years instead of *four*, which is the general hypothesis.

I shall conclude this Section with observing, that, according to the preceding disposition of our Lord's history, we have an easy plan of his public ministry, and observe a pretty equal distribution of his labours, to instruct and convert the people of the Jews. For, almost all the former half of the year was spent in Galilee, and the latter in Judea.

Galilee is a country of about forty miles in length, lying *East* and *West*, and about fifteen, or in some places twenty miles in breadth. *Cana* is situated on the Western part of

it, *Nazareth* about the centre, and *Capernaum* in the East. This part of the country was, probably, the most populous, being situated upon the sea of Galilee, which employed a great number of ships.

Our Lord spent all the early part of his life at *Nazareth*; but probably was not conspicuous. He began to work miracles at *Cana* in the *West*, but presently, leaving that place, he spent the first part of his public preaching in the more populous country, about *Capernaum*, in the *East*; after he had opened his commission, as we may say, in *Judea*, and especially in the parts near Jordan, where *John* had borne witness of him, and pointed him out to the people.

During the first weeks of his preaching in *Capernaum* and the neighbourhood, he was closely attended by his disciples, who may be supposed not to be yet qualified to preach themselves. But before he left *Galilee* for that time, he removed to *Nazareth* and its neighbourhood, where the people must have been in some measure prepared to receive him; and not having much time to spend there, he sent out the twelve apostles, two and two, to assist him in going over that part of the country, which seems to have been but thinly inhabited.

After *pentecost* our Lord made a progress through *Trachonitis*, and to the utmost northern boundary of the land of Canaan, towards *Tyre* and *Sidon*. During this part of his stay in Galilee, it is not improbable but that his disciples might assist him in preaching the gospel, though it be not particularly mentioned.

Taking his final leave of *Galilee*, Jesus sent out *seventy disciples*, to preach in the larger country of Judea. He also several times visited the country beyond Jordan; nor was Samaria by any means neglected by him.

Upon the whole, all the country that was formerly possessed by the twelve tribes, may be supposed to have been pretty equally enlightened by the preaching of the gospel, and to have enjoyed nearly equal advantages, during the course of our Lord's public preaching. *

* For "A Jewish and Julian Calendar for the Time of the Public Ministry of Christ," and "A Chronological Table of Considerable Events from the Beginning of the Reign of Herod, to the Death of Christ," annexed to these *Observations*, in 1776 and 1780, see the last Volume of the present Edition.

Since the Note †, *supra*, p. 48, was printed, I have found the following remark, by *Whiston*: "Dr. Bentley revived, from his own perusal of *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*—that *Valentinian* notion, that our Saviour preached only one year.—This notion came first from Dr. Bentley to Dr. Hare, and from him to his pupil, Mr. Nicholas Mann—who demonstrated an impossibility, as well as an impossibility could be demonstrated." *Memoirs*, Ed. 2, 1753, pp. 101, 102. See *Biog. Brit.* II. p. 245.

LETTERS
TO
ARCHBISHOP NEWCOME,
ON
THE DURATION OF
Our Saviour's Ministry.

Multa renascentur quæ jam cecidere ; cadentque
Quæ nunc sunt in honore——.

HORACE, *De Art. Poet.* l. 70.

[*Birmingham*—1780 and 1781.]

TWO LETTERS

TO

DR. NEWCOME, BISHOP OF WATERFORD,

LATE OF OSSORY, *

[1780.]

LETTER I. †

MY LORD,

I THINK myself honoured by the notice your Lordship has thought proper to take of my *Harmony of the Gospels*, in the notes annexed to your own; ‡ and as the greatest candour is conspicuous in every thing your Lordship advances in opposition to my hypothesis, you will, I doubt not, receive what I shall now urge in defence of it with equal candour.

Our subject is not, indeed, of the first importance to us as *Christian Divines*, but it is a matter of some moment to us as *critics*. On both sides, our object, I am confident, is *truth*, and that we shall equally think we have gained an

* Translated in 1775, from *Dromore*, to which he had been appointed in 1766. In 1779 he was translated to *Waterford*, and in 1795 to the Primacy of *Armagh*. Archbishop Newcome died in 1800, aged 70. He “descended from a Nonconformist family.”

Several interesting Letters from this Prelate to Dr. Toulmin were communicated by Dr. T. in 1806, to the *Monthly Repository*. In one, dated *Waterford*, Sept. 7, 1794, the Bishop says, “Dr. Priestley sent me, as a parting mark of attention, his last volume of *Sermons on the Evidences of Revelation*.” See *Mon. Repos.* l. pp. 456—458, 518—520.

† The former of these Letters is contained in my *English Harmony of the Evangelists*; but not being large, it is now reprinted, that the whole correspondence might be before the reader in a more convenient form. It was the more expedient to do this, as my correspondent has set me the example of quitting the form of his *Harmony*, in printing his Letter, and as it is uncertain how far this amicable controversy may extend. When the whole is completed, these *Letters* may make a volume of themselves. (*P.*) *Adv.* 1780.

‡ “An *Harmony of the Gospels*: in which the Original Text is disposed after Le Clerc’s general Manner; with such various Readings at the Foot of the Page as have received Wetstein’s Sanction in his Folio Edition of the Greek Testament. Observations are subjoined, tending to settle the Time and Place of every Transaction, to establish the Series of Facts, and to reconcile seeming Inconsistencies. By William Newcome, D.D., Bishop of Ossory,” *Dublin*, 1778.

advantage, if any thing should be advanced on either side that shall contribute to the discovery of it.

With this full confidence I take the liberty to address to yourself what has occurred to me in considering your objections to my hypothesis, or rather that of Mr. Mann, but more truly still that of the *ancients*. For there is no doubt that our Lord's public ministry having extended no farther than one complete year was the opinion of the earliest Christian fathers who have mentioned the subject, and that, with very few exceptions, it continued to be so till the time of *Eusebius*.* The opposite opinion, therefore, being the novel one, may rather seem to require something that should be called an apology. However, as the less ancient opinion (viz. that of our Lord's ministry having continued two, three, or four complete years) has long been the prevailing one, and was, I believe, universally so before Mr. Mann revived that of the ancients,† I who have adopted it am content to call myself an apologist on this occasion; and, as one of this class, I beg your Lordship's attention to the following replies to your remarks; and very happy should I think myself if your Lordship would condescend to enter into an amicable discussion of the question with me.

Hackneyed as the subject has been, there is much new matter before us; and if, by this or any other means, a general attention could be drawn to subjects of *Christian literature*, it would (as, I dare say, your Lordship will be of opinion) be a considerable advantage in an age in which every thing relating to *religion* is manifestly getting out of sight, even with respect to the generality of those who do read and think; which was by no means the case formerly.

Not a century ago, there was, I believe, hardly any man of letters who did not read and study, so as to pretend to have some opinion or other on almost every theological question. Whether they liked or disliked, theological writings were interesting to them; whereas at present every thing that savours of theology is by the generality treated with indifference, if not with contempt.

I flatter myself, however, that the prevailing indifference to these subjects is not even now so very great, but that if divines of your Lordship's rank and character would follow the example of your Lordship, and shew that they have the subject of religion so much at heart as to *write* about it,

* See *supra*, p. 47.

† See *ibid.* p. 48.

it would again become a subject of general attention ; and from *speculative religion* (and such inconveniences as, with such beings as men are, must be expected to arise from the discussion of it) some *practical good* will not fail to accrue. In all controversy, let who will be the combatants, the chances must, in the end, be in favour of truth, and religious truth has numberless connexions with virtue. Bishop Pearce's *Commentary*, and Bishop Lowth's Translation of *Isaiah*, together with your Lordship's *Harmony of the Gospels*, already give us some prospect of the revival of a more general attention to theological studies.

All your Lordship's objections to the hypothesis I have endeavoured to support are drawn from *internal considerations*, exclusively of all foreign evidence ; and though I cannot help wishing your Lordship had entered into a free discussion of the whole, I have no great objection to resting the evidence on internal arguments ; thinking the opinion of our Lord's public ministry having continued only one complete year, much more agreeable to what appears on the face of the history itself than any other.

The circumstances that your Lordship thinks bear the hardest on my scheme are the following : The stay that you suppose our Lord must have made at Jerusalem and in Judea, at and immediately after the first passover ; the time that must have been taken in his journey from thence to Galilee, and his travels about that country. All these articles I shall, therefore, consider in the first place, and then make a few other observations.

1. Your Lordship supposes, that Jesus continued at Jerusalem at least during all the eight days of the festival, whereas I do not find that any thing is said to have been performed by him at that passover that requires more than the few days that I have supposed him to have stayed there at that time, especially as on my scheme, (and I have nothing to do with any other,) he did not cleanse the temple at that time. But admitting this, it could not be the business of more than an hour or two ; and both that transaction and the *miracles* he is said to have wrought there at that time, which are only mentioned in general, and not specified, might, for any thing that we know to the contrary, have been dispatched, even in one day, and Nicodemus might visit him the evening of the day following, or even of the same day. For that visit is full as likely to have followed the first hearing of the miracles as not ; and in a crowded city, as Jerusalem was at that time, it cannot but be sup-

posed that the news of a thing so new and extraordinary would spread through the whole in a single day.

As to what your Lordship observes about the time of Jesus cleansing the temple, in reply to Mr. Mann's arguments, Bp. Pearce's, and my own,* I shall only say, that, after giving the closest attention to your remarks, I do not see that it by any means amounts to a sufficient answer. I am therefore still decisively of opinion, that this transaction, perhaps the boldest, and the most provoking of any thing that he ever did, respecting the Jewish rulers, is to be referred to the last passover, when he had no farther measures to observe with respect to them. This, however, not being essential to my hypothesis concerning the duration of our Lord's ministry, I shall not enter into a particular discussion of it.

Also with respect to the transposition of the *fifth* and *sixth* chapters of *John's* Gospel, I am fully satisfied with resting it on the evidence that has already been advanced in support of it.†

2. On our Lord's being said to *tarry* in Judea, and to make more disciples than John, before his return into Galilee, (*John* iii. 22, iv. 1,) you lay very great stress. But how "the word *διατρίβω*" should necessarily import "a considerable space of time," when you acknowledge, that in the book of *Acts*, (xxv. 6, xx. 6,) "it is sometimes restricted to ten or seven days," ‡ I do not see. Indeed, I see no reason why, if the context will admit of it, it might not be restrained to a single day, or even a few hours, just as we actually use the word *tarry* or *stay*; longer or shorter being only terms of comparison, what is long in one respect being short in another.

But what you lay the most stress on is the circumstance of Jesus making more disciples than *John* in this interval, interpreting this to mean, that he "was then making and baptizing more disciples than John had ever made and baptized." § Your Lordship, however, must allow me to say, that I find no authority whatever for this interpretation in the evangelical history, the whole tenor of which appears to me to be evidently contrary to it. It is not even at all probable that Jesus made so many disciples as *John* did by *all* his preaching, of whatever extent you make it. *John* appears to have been almost universally well received; but

* See "Bp. Newcome's Notes on the Harmony," pp. 7—9.

† See *supra*, p. 50.

‡ Notes, p. 9. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 11. (P.)

Jesus, for reasons that I have no occasion to enlarge upon here, was by no means so.

All that *can* be meant, therefore, is, that Jesus, at this opening of his ministry, made more disciples than *John* did *at that particular time*, which is altogether indefinite. And after the miracles he had begun to work, and especially in Jerusalem itself, in the neighbourhood of which he then was, it can be no wonder that more attention should be given to him *at that time* than to John, who never pretended to work miracles, whose preaching was not then *new* to them, and whose ministry was then nearly expiring; having, indeed, according to every thing that appears, few new disciples to make. Our Lord may, therefore, well be supposed to have made more disciples than *John* did in these circumstances, and yet not have made very many.

But admitting that he made disciples in some considerable number, let it be considered how many converts *Peter* made by one discourse, and it cannot be thought very extraordinary, that the successful preaching of a few days, accompanied, as his preaching was, with the working of miracles, at that time a new and astonishing thing, and the advantage he derived from the immediately preceding testimony of *John*, who was held in universal esteem, and the general expectation of the *Messiah*, should be sufficient to account for all that the evangelist has said on this occasion; especially considering that the thing was not so considerable as to have been even noticed by any other evangelist than John, though it was prior to any thing that they have related of the ministry of Jesus, when it was least likely to escape their notice, if it had been at all considerable.

Your supposing, that, upon this occasion, our Lord “proceeded—with that reserve and circumspection which his vicinity to the Jewish rulers seems to have required,”* is hardly consistent with the supposition of his making so many disciples. *John* appears to have preached without any reserve at all, indeed with general approbation.

Besides this indefinite expression of tarrying in Judea, and the circumstance of our Lord’s making more disciples there than John, you urge our Lord’s saying, (*John* iv. 35,) “Say ye not after four months and then cometh the harvest?” as if this must have been pronounced at the time of sowing barley; and therefore you fix this journey in November or December, and consequently you make our Lord’s abode in

* Notes, p. 17. (P.)

Judea after this first passover about eight months ; though afterwards you content yourself with saying it could not be less than one month.

But is not this, my Lord, laying a great stress upon a very precarious foundation? By our Lord's introducing this observation with *Say ye not*, I should rather conclude that he was quoting a known proverbial expression, which might therefore be used as well at one time of the year as another. And surely his resting himself at the well at six o'clock, or noon, rather leads us to imagine that he was fatigued and thirsty with travelling in the heat of the day, a short time after the passover, when also water could not be very plentiful, than that it was in the winter season.

You do not seem, my Lord, to have considered sufficiently the several inconveniences that must arise to your system from this stay of eight months in Judea, and of Jesus making so many disciples at that time. It is exceedingly evident that the great fame of Jesus in *Galilee* was subsequent to the miracles that he wrought after his arrival there, and that it was more especially occasioned by his curing the démoniac in the synagogue at *Capernaum*, and all the sick persons that were brought to him on the evening of the same day. Now is this easily consistent with our Lord's having made more disciples than John had ever done, when he may be said to have discipled and baptized the great mass of the Jewish nation? The report of miracles wrought so publicly, as those of Jesus subsequent to the passover generally were, could not but have spread very fast in that state of the Jewish nation, in a general expectation of the Messiah, heightened by the preaching of John.

Notwithstanding the great omissions that your Lordship observes there are in some parts of the gospel history, * it must certainly be thought very improbable, that *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke* should have known of this long stay of Jesus in Judea, and not have noticed it. Other omissions are generally of such things as were similar to such as they had noticed before, or of what, on some other account, they might deem unnecessary after what they had related. But here would be an omission of what may almost be called the very first open publication of the gospel, and of the first public miracles, of the greatest number of disciples that Jesus ever made, and likewise of the falling off of those disciples, which to me is altogether

* "The evangelists often omit very important events." *Notes*, p. 17.

unaccountable ; for on our Lord's appearance in Galilee we find him almost without attendants, and no crowds about him till after the cure of the demoniac at Capernaum.

Many things could not but have happened in these eight months, both *discourses* and *miracles*, that could not have failed to engage the peculiar attention of any person who should have been informed of them, and have undertaken to write our Lord's history ; and yet the history of his appearance in *Galilee* is so written by three of the evangelists, as if they had no idea of any thing very material having been done by him before. This circumstance, considering the nature of the human mind, and the usual manner of writing history, I deem to be almost a demonstration, that nothing, at least nothing comparable to what followed, had then happened.

According to my disposition of these events, the whole, as I cannot help thinking, must appear quite easy and natural. Before the passover our Lord had wrought a single miracle at a private marriage in *Cana*. It is probable he had not at that time preached in public at all, or wrought any miracle of a more public nature. The first of this kind appear to have been those performed at Jerusalem during the feast ; and yet because they are not distinctly mentioned, even by *John*, (who knew that no notice whatever had been taken of them by any of the other evangelists,) it is probable they fell far short of the magnitude of those wrought afterwards in Galilee ; and indeed it might naturally be expected that some kind of *gradation* would be observed in these things, and that our Lord would not pass without any interval from such a miracle as that at *Cana*, which was not known, in the first instance, but to the servants of a private family, to those of such *éclat* as he performed afterwards.

In *Galilee* also the gospel is always said to have *begun*. Thus the Jews before Pilate accusing Jesus, say, (*Luke* xxiii. 5,) “ He stirreth up the people, teaching through all Jewry, beginning from Galilee, to this place.” *Peter* also preaching before Cornelius, says, (*Acts* x. 37,) “ That word ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached ;” and he expressly says afterwards, (*ver.* 39,) “ And we are witnesses of **ALL** things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem.” Could he with truth have said this, if he had known of Jesus' having preached eight months in *Judea* before he had preached in *Galilee* at all, and of his having by that preaching made more disciples than John had done in

the whole course of his ministry? Indeed, I have observed in my *Dissertations*,* that *Matthew* himself expressly says, (speaking of Jesus' arrival in Galilee, iv. 17,) "From that time began Jesus to preach." Now what is there to oppose to all this substantial evidence, but *John's* saying that our Lord *tarried*, that is, that he *made some stay* in Judea before he set out for Galilee, which, circumstanced as he then was, could not, I think, have been more than a few days?

I wish your Lordship would also consider another inconvenience attending this supposed long stay of Jesus in *Judea*, and his making so many disciples there, which I urged very strongly in my *Dissertations*,† but of which I do not find that your Lordship has taken any notice at all. You suppose Jesus to have exercised his ministry in Judea so long, and with so much success, as to have gained a decided superiority over *John*, which must of course have been a thing of great *notoriety*. You also suppose him to have preached long after this, viz. according to the plan of your *Harmony*, till near the third passover, which is, in all, almost *two years* before the death of John, and yet *Herod* is plainly supposed by all the evangelists not to have heard any thing of him in all that time, insomuch that after the death of John, he really entertained the notion that Jesus must have been John himself risen from the dead; and as he then worked miracles, which he had not done before, having greater powers than he was invested with before his decease.

From the manner in which the evangelists *Matthew* and *Mark* introduce this account of the conjecture of *Herod*, it is evident that they had no idea of his having so much as heard any thing about Jesus before the death of John. *Matt.* xiv. 1: "At that time" (not before) "Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus." *Mark* vi. 14: "And king Herod heard of him, for his fame was spread abroad." I thought it necessary to assign some reason why Herod might be supposed not to have heard of Jesus during the *few weeks* that, on my hypothesis, he had preached, before the death of *John*, ascribing it to his being probably engaged in a multiplicity of business, or pleasure. How your Lordship will be able to account for Herod's not having heard of him, preaching in public, and working miracles, as you suppose him to have done, for the space of *near two years*, I have no idea. All that you say at present, is that "Herod first

* *Supra*, p. 57.

† *Ibid.* p. 54—56.

doubted who Jesus was ; but at length resolved that he was John the Baptist risen from the dead ;” * a very extraordinary *doubt*, in the circumstances in which your Lordship places him, but a more extraordinary *determination*, after, what we must suppose, some deliberation and inquiry.

This argument is not a *reductio ad absurdum* of the same kind with those of *Euclid*, but let any person consider all the circumstances of this case, especially that *Herod* was not a *Roman*, but a *Jew*, surrounded by Jews, and not unattentive to his religion, who had even taken some pleasure in hearing *John* preach ; for we read, (*Mark* vi. 20,) that “he did many things,” (probably things that John had recommended,) “and heard him gladly ;” that this preaching of Jesus had been always near his own dominions, (for it was probably in his way to Galilee,) and that the whole country of Judea at that time, including all Galilee, was not much larger than Yorkshire ; and I think he must pronounce that the thing is hardly, in fact, less credible, and that a plan of a Harmony labouring under this difficulty, (and in fact every *Harmony* except that of Mr. Maun is thus circumstanced,) cannot deserve much attention. I think I may venture to challenge any person to draw out a plan of a Harmony that shall extend the public ministry of Christ to more than one complete year, in such a manner as that this one difficulty, not to mention many others, shall not be insuperable. But perhaps what strikes me so much may not strike your Lordship at all. I wish, however, your Lordship had attended to it, and given us your thoughts upon it.

3. The journey from *Judea* to *Cana* you suppose “not to have occupied less than *six* or *seven* days,” † whereas his stay at *Sychar* is limited to two days, which, according to the Jewish phraseology might mean no more than part of two days, and the whole journey from Jerusalem to Galilee was but of three days, according to our Lord’s own mode of travelling ; and as the part of Judea from which our Lord set out for Galilee was probably the most remote from Jerusalem, the place he had left, (and he would naturally recede farther and farther from it,) the journey might not be more than two days. Now in my computation, I have allowed four days for it, and could have taken another day, or more, if I had thought it necessary. Surely, my Lord,

* *Notes*, p. 26. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 17. (P.)

there can be no great improbability in this. Let us now proceed to Galilee.

4. To invalidate my computation of time, you suppose what the evangelist does not mention, and what appears to me to be by no means necessary. "Jesus," you say, "must have remained at Cana a few days, let us say four, because Jesus's presence at Cana was notified at Capernaum before the nobleman set out to meet him."* Now *John*, who is the only evangelist that mentions the transaction, only says, (iv. 47,) "When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee" (not to *Cana*). Now as Jesus had taught at Jerusalem, made some disciples in Judea, and stayed two days at Sychar, it might very well be known at Capernaum, a place of great resort, that he had left Judea, was travelling towards Galilee, and even that he would certainly go to Cana, and the nobleman might set out before it was known that Jesus was actually arrived at Cana. It is not impossible, therefore, but both of them might arrive there the same day. Besides, you make the distance between Capernaum and Cana no more than twenty-three miles, which is so small, that Jesus might have arrived at Cana in the evening, and it might have been known at Capernaum the next morning; and the nobleman did probably set out in the morning, because we find that Jesus pronounced his son cured at the seventh hour, or an hour after noon.

5. Your Lordship lays great stress on the stay that you suppose Jesus made at *Nazareth* and its neighbourhood, before he arrived at *Capernaum*, allowing eight days for his preaching before his arrival at Nazareth, and four days at Nazareth. But I think I have shewn, unanswerably, that this visit to Nazareth was subsequent to his preaching at Capernaum, and therefore shall not argue it in this place.

6. But the argument on which your Lordship seems to lay the greatest stress is drawn from what is said (*Matt.* iv. 23) of our Lord's going "about all Galilee," after his arrival at *Capernaum*, subsequent to his curing the *demoniac* in the synagogue there. A month, you say, is a moderate space of time for these transactions; whereas I allow no more than a week to them.

* *Notes*, p. 17. (*P.*) "Jesus's presence in Cana is notified at Capernaum, distant about twenty-three miles. One of Herod's court attends Jesus, requests that he would heal his son, receives assurance that his son should live, about one in the afternoon according to our computation, and the next day meets his servants coming from Capernaum to inform him of his son's recovery. Jesus therefore must have remained at Cana a few days, let us say *four*." *Ibid.*

Surely, my Lord, in this, as in a former case, you lay too great stress on *general expressions*, which, after all, you yourself cannot suppose to be understood quite literally; for *all Galilee* cannot mean here every town and village in Galilee; and if it *must* be restricted, why may it not be to the places in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, especially *Chorasin* and *Bethsaida*, which were probably within a few miles of Capernaum. Our Lord himself seems to lead to this construction, by saying, after he had left Capernaum, (*Mark* i. 38,) "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth." And as it is evident that a single day had sufficed him at Capernaum, so that he was obliged to depart, on account of the crowds that resorted to him, less than a day might well suffice for any other place.

Had our Lord's perambulation been particularly described, so that you could have written a complete *itinerary* of his journey, this argument would have deserved more attention; but phrases so indeterminate as these, and by writers who are known and acknowledged to use other phrases of the greatest extent in very limited senses, surely will not bear so much stress. Your Lordship supposes that this progress through Galilee was about seventy miles. But the supposition is altogether arbitrary. To have visited *every place* he must have travelled seventy times as far; to have walked the boundary would have answered no purpose; but to visit a few of the principal places in the neighbourhood of the town from which he set out, might not require a journey of more than a few days. And, as I have indeed already observed, it is after this very journey, that he is said by *Mark* (ii. 1) to have "entered into Capernaum after some days" only, and according to the *Vulgate* translation, it is *after eight days*, and yet this very evangelist says, (i. 39,) that on this journey "he preached—throughout all Galilee."

Your Lordship says, that "before the embassy from John, Jesus had actually wrought a great proportion of his miracles in Chorasin and Bethsaida:" and that, "allowing time for these miracles, and sufficient ground for so solemn a denunciation, must create an embarrassment to the adopters of Mr. Mann's hypothesis."* Now, really, my Lord, I feel no kind of embarrassment on the occasion; when even a single miracle, publicly performed in each of those places, and especially as much as we know to have been transacted at *Capernaum* in the evening of a single day, when our

* *Notes*, p. 21. (P.)

Lord cured all the sick that were brought to him, would abundantly justify all the denunciations, solemn as they are. In fact, his repeating the same thing day after day in the same place, for a month together, would not have produced any more effect, probably even less, than his doing it in one day, provided the miracles he wrought there were publicly known and universally acknowledged.

The preaching of our Saviour is not to be compared to that of Christian ministers at this day, when no miracles are wrought, but only truths laid down, and motives inculcated, which require *time* to produce any considerable effect. The proper subject of his preaching lay in a small compass, viz. *the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel*, or something else to the same effect ; and all that he had to *do* was to confirm this assertion, and enforce this belief, by well-attested miracles. His moral *instructions* were given only occasionally, as he found opportunity. He had, therefore, no long sermons to make, but only to say and do what might leave an impression on the minds of his auditors, that he came with a commission from God, and especially enable them to infer that he was the person foretold by the prophets under the character of their *Messiah*. Considering our Lord's business in this view, I cannot help thinking *one year*, in so small a country as Judea, a much more natural and probable period for his public ministry, than three or four.

7. Your Lordship maintains the reading of *πασχα* in *John* vi. 4, though Mr. Mann supposes it to be an interpolation,* and Bp. Pearce conjectures that the whole verse may be so. This is an instance in which the minds of different persons are very differently impressed by the same thing. I think it certain that *Irenæus* had not this word in his copy of the gospel, whereas your Lordship thinks, "he might wholly overlook this passage,"† notwithstanding it made so much for his purpose to have discovered and noticed it. As to Mr. Mann's argument, that the early Christian fathers could not have supposed, as they did, that our Lord preached only one year, if, in their copies of the gospel, this text had been the same that it is in ours, you content yourself with saying, that "too strict attention and accuracy in the ancient fathers are here supposed."‡ Now I will allow, with your Lordship, that with respect to justness of reasoning, and some other matters, extreme accuracy is not to be expected of them ; but in a thing so palpable as this,

* See *supra*, p. 51.

† *Notes*, p. 27. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.*

not to have discovered this circumstance must imply greater inattention and stupidity than almost any man, and much more a body of men, and a series of writers, can possibly be suspected of. I cannot help thinking, therefore, that the distinct mention of the three passovers which we now find in the Gospel of *John* would necessarily have precluded any such opinion as that our Lord's public ministry did not continue more than one complete year; whereas, excepting the case of *Irenæus* only, (who, however, does not pretend to have had *this* support of his opinion, and whose prejudices may well enough be accounted for,) this was the opinion of all the learned fathers for several centuries. After the time of *Irenæus*, if not before, the subject was certainly *attended to*, and even then both *Austin* and *Jerome*, two of the most learned men of their time, evidently considered our Lord's public ministry as included within the space of little more than two years.

That even *Eusebius*, who probably first adopted the hypothesis that has prevailed ever since, had not, however, this reading (on whatever else he might ground his opinion), I still think very probable. For, consistently with this, I do not see how he could maintain, as he does, that the three first evangelists have recorded the actions of our Saviour for *one year only*, viz. after the imprisonment of *John the Baptist*; since events that, I believe, all *Harmonists* refer to periods before this passover, are noticed by the other evangelists as having happened after the imprisonment of John; and a whole year at least must necessarily have intervened between this passover and that in which our Lord suffered. According to your Lordship's own arrangement of the facts, a very great part of the evangelical history belongs to the time before this passover; for you make it the third of our Lord's ministry, and you place the imprisonment of John presently after the first passover; consequently your Lordship's idea of the distribution of events in the Gospel history is widely different indeed from that of *Eusebius*. Nor do I think it possible to form a *Harmony* agreeable to his idea of all the events recorded by *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke* falling within one year, and retain this reading.

Having now replied to all your Lordship's objections to my hypothesis, you will allow me to express my regret that you should have reprobated it without considering *all* the arguments by which it is supported. I should have been particularly glad to have known in what light several, at least, of the most considerable of them appear to the mind

of a person so ingenuous as your Lordship. I shall take the liberty on this occasion to recall some of them to your Lordship's attention, and I wish that, if you should think proper to reconsider this subject, you would make some observation with respect to them.

If the internal evidence had been *all* that we could have access to, we must have been obliged to acquiesce in it, and have been content to make the most of it. But it appears to me very extraordinary that, when positive external evidence is actually within our reach, no regard whatever should be paid to it. Now it happens that many of the most respectable of the early Christian writers have given their decisive evidence in favour of our Lord's public ministry having continued only one complete year; and their being ever so fanciful and weak in some things cannot affect their testimony to such a *fact* as this, which must have been within the knowledge of their immediate predecessors; and their mentioning it without the least doubt or hesitation on the subject, implies that they had no idea of there being any other opinion about it. The earliest writers were certainly the most likely to have the best information concerning this fact; and if any misapprehension should arise about it, it is most likely to have arisen in later ages.

Your Lordship, I observe by the way, dates the first year of our Saviour's ministry by A.D. 30. Now it is, I believe, the unanimous opinion of the ancients, that our Lord was crucified when the *Gemini* were consuls, which was A.D. 29. If by A.D. your Lordship means not the year of the vulgar era, but the true year of the life of Jesus, besides its being a singular method of notation, it will, I think, involve your Lordship in great difficulties with respect to the received chronology of other capital events of those times.

Neglecting the proper external evidence, I wish your Lordship had attended more particularly to the conduct of *Luke* compared with itself only. He dates, with remarkable circumstantiality, the beginning of the preaching of *John*, from which it is almost a certainty that it was A.D. 28, or the fifteenth year of the proper reign of *Tiberius*, after the death of *Augustus*; and, according to the course of his narrative, as all persons must have concluded if no other gospel had been extant, it was in the year immediately following this, that Christ suffered. This, therefore, must have been A.D. 29, the very year in which the *Gemini* were consuls. Now would he not have prevented this necessary inference, if he had been aware that it was not agreeable to the truth;

having, according to your idea of his conduct, omitted every note of time that could possibly distinguish the three or four years which you suppose to have intervened between these events?

On the hypothesis that I have adopted, his conduct is quite natural; for he gives a precise date for the preaching of *John*, but does not give any date for the death of Christ, because, according to his narrative, it evidently happened the year following. Surely he who has dated with so much precision the less important event of the preaching of John, would not have failed to fix the date of the more important event, the death of Christ, if he had not taken it for granted, that it might be easily and certainly inferred from the course of his narrative.

With respect to the omission of any mention of our Lord's attendance at the public feasts of the Jews, which is certainly a difficulty on your Lordship's hypothesis, you are pleased to say, that "from his baptism" to the second pass-over, "Jesus was so employed in the great work of his ministry, that he went not up to Jerusalem at any Jewish feast, except that recorded, John ch. ii."* Now surely he who expressly said, (*Matt.* iii. 15,) that it became him "to fulfil all righteousness," would not neglect so important a part of the duty of a Jew. And if his ministry lasted, as you suppose, three years and a half, he had surely time enough to attend to the proper duties of it, without omitting others which were acknowledged to be of universal obligation. Besides, his appearance at the public feasts must have been of particular consequence to the publication of his credentials as the *Messiah*, and indeed of his preaching in general; because every male Jew was obliged to attend at all those feasts, so that there would have been nobody left in the country with whom he could exercise whatever it is that you mean by "the great work of his ministry," but the women and children, the old and the infirm.

Besides these articles, I hope your Lordship will not fail particularly to consider the extreme improbability of *Herod's* not being able to distinguish between John and Jesus on the supposition of our Saviour having preached so long as you make him to have done before the death of *John*, viz. two years and a half, and two whole years of it after his imprisonment.

Your Lordship will also please to attend to the very remarkable omission of all notes of time for so many years

* *Notes*, p. 15. (*P.*)

as you suppose to be omitted in the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, and give some attention to the other articles advanced by me in my eighth Section.* But without considering the plan of my *Harmony*, or the arguments that I have advanced in favour of it, I wish your Lordship would cast your eye deliberately over your own, and consider how very little of the Gospel history you include in the transactions of the first year of our Lord's public ministry. You suppose him to work some miracles, not specified, at Jerusalem, and to discourse with Nicodemus; to make disciples in Judea; but without specifying either discourses or miracles, in a residence of several months. You farther make him travel through *Samaria*, cure the nobleman's son at *Cana*, preach one sabbath at *Nazareth*, call *Simon* and *Andrew*, cure the demoniac at *Capernaum*, a leper in the neighbouring country, and also a paralytic person, and, finally, to call *Matthew* to attend him. This is all that is recorded in the first year.

Compare this with the business which you throw into the second, and especially the third year, and I cannot help thinking that the distribution will appear to your Lordship's attentive reconsideration exceedingly unnatural. The first events would necessarily make the greatest impression on the minds of our Saviour's followers and historians, and subsequent transactions of a similar nature would be those that would be passed over in silence; a conduct which on the first view of my *calendar*,† appears to be actually observed, according to the hypothesis that I have adopted.

I shall not here enter into any discussion of other incidental points of difference between your Lordship and myself, as that of *the inspiration of the evangelists as writers*,‡ which you adopt, and which I consider as nothing less than a millstone about the neck of Christianity, and from which I would, therefore, willingly disengage it.

* *Supra*, pp. 54—56.

† See *supra*, p. 118, *Note* *.

‡ Bishop Newcome having referred to Dr. Middleton's "Reflections on the Variations, or Inconsistencies, which are found among the Four Evangelists, in their different Accounts of the same Facts," adds, "Dr. Priestley in his late *Harmony*, has revived Mr. Mann's opinion with regard to our Lord's ministerial year. Dr. Middleton and Dr. Priestley on the subject of the Four Gospels, bear a great resemblance to each other: which I mention as a fact in the history of opinions, and that the attention of the reader may be raised to positions advanced by men of such abilities.

"Each denies the plenary and constant inspiration of the evangelists; each thinks that his opinion on this subject promotes the cause of Christianity; each appeals to fact in proof of it; each allows imperfect information, and irreconcilable and erroneous accounts in these writers; and each admits their evidence in important facts, while he rejects it in some minute and circumstantial ones." *Pref.* p. iii.

With respect to the subject of this Letter, I am happy in agreeing with your Lordship, that "all the real difficulties in harmonizing the gospels,—will at length yield to the efforts of rational criticism," * and, notwithstanding my attachment to other pursuits, I hope I can also with truth, say with your Lordship, that "the advancement of sacred literature is the end of my studies, and the object of my ambition." †

With the greatest respect for your Lordship's character,

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's

Very humble Servant,

And Fellow-labourer in the Gospel of Jesus Christ,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Calne, August, 1779.

LETTER II.

MY LORD,

IT is with sincere pleasure that I find your Lordship has entered so largely into the discussion of the question concerning "the duration of our Lord's ministry," ‡ as I flatter myself that some new light will, by this means, be thrown upon it, whether it be decided to general satisfaction or not. I should have made this reply much sooner, had not a tedious illness, from which I several times had little hope of recovery, and likewise a total change in my situation and affairs (which left me no opportunity of consulting books, or writing any thing) intervened. But as soon as ever I found myself in tolerable health, and sufficiently at leisure, I sat down to read your Lordship's letter to me, with care, and to write what I now present to your Lordship, and our readers, in reply to it.

If my address to your Lordship be not in a very high degree respectful, I do assure you it does not by any means correspond with my feelings and intentions. The discussion of this question, which I find is interesting to many Christian critics, (and this is, I believe, the first time that it has ever been properly discussed,) is of itself highly agreeable to me,

* *Preface*, p. iii.

† *Ibid.*

‡ See "The Duration of our Lord's Ministry particularly considered: in Reply to a Letter from Dr. Priestley on that Subject, prefixed to his English Harmony of the Evangelists. By William Newcome, D.D., Bishop of Waterford."—*Dublin*, 1780.

who love these studies; and to discuss it with a person of your Lordship's learning, and most amiable candour, I consider as highly honourable to me.

Considering this business as one that necessarily draws my attention to the sacred writings, (which, with whatever view we look into them, with due attention, cannot fail to reward our search,) this amicable controversy has charms for me as well as for your Lordship. And since, as you justly observe, "studying the Scriptures" may be "compared to repeating philosophical experiments,"* in the course of which the most unexpected discoveries are often made, † I hope we shall neither of us desist from this investigation, till nothing more shall remain that we shall be able to advance in order to complete it.

To be as little tedious as possible, I shall touch but slightly, if at all, upon any topics on which I shall be able to advance nothing that shall appear to myself to be *new*, or materially to affect what your Lordship has advanced on the same subject. By this means the whole of the evidence on the greater part of the several topics will soon be produced, and the controversy will pretty quickly come to its proper termination; at least all the evidence that each of us shall be able to collect will be before the public, whose decision will follow in due time.

To introduce as much distinctness as I can into the conduct of this argument, and thereby to make it less tiresome to your Lordship, and to our readers, I shall, in this, and all the subsequent Letters, discuss each article in a separate Section.

SECTION I.

Of the Testimony of the Christian Fathers.

IN the first place, I wish your Lordship to reconsider the testimony of the early Christian fathers, which appears to me to be more decisive than you seem to be aware of, and to attend to some circumstances relating to it, which you seem to have overlooked.

Notwithstanding you endeavour to qualify some of my authorities, you do not deny, that it was a received opinion

* *Reply*, p. 16. (P.)

† "Something unexpectedly arises to the critic, or philosopher, which delights and decides him." *Ibid.*

with several of the Christian fathers, and especially some of the earliest of them, that our Saviour's ministry did not extend much beyond a year. Your Lordship thinks you can account for this; but when you shall reconsider the reasons you have produced, I cannot help thinking you will be sensible that they are altogether insufficient for the purpose.

You say, "They thought that the three first evangelists recorded only our Lord's actions for one year, after John's imprisonment; and they seem to have put this most public part of Jesus's ministry for the whole of it." *

Now I wonder your Lordship should not have considered both *how* they came to do this, and likewise what is the necessary *consequence* of supposing even thus much. Even *Eusebius*, the first who extended our Lord's ministry beyond two years and a half, † and, as far as appears, all other writers, till the very moderns, supposed that the three first evangelists related only the events of one year; that is, they go upon the idea, that only one year intervened between the imprisonment of *John* and the death of Christ. But this space, by your Lordship's own confession, includes all the events that Mr. Mann and myself endeavour to bring within the compass of a year. So that, whatever the ancients thought of that part of our Lord's ministry which preceded the imprisonment of *John the Baptist*, (which they suppose to be recorded by *John*,) they all agreed with me in every thing that your Lordship finds the hardest to be reconciled to in my hypothesis.

Whatever journeys your Lordship puts to my account, the same you must put to theirs; and every mile you make our Saviour to walk per day, affects them just as much as myself. We also perfectly agree in the time allowed for the instruction of the apostles, and every thing else that you can say was of much importance to our Lord's great object; nor is it possible your Lordship can make us differ much with respect to the various perambulations of all Galilee, the time taken up by the mission of the twelve, or the seventy, &c. And yet all the absurdity and embarrassment that you imagine you find in the scheme is put to the account of us poor moderns only. This is, indeed, very hard, when all the ancients to a man, of whatever duration they made the *whole* of Christ's ministry, are equally chargeable with it, and led us into it.

* *Reply*, p. 130. (P.)

† See *supra*, pp. 47, 122.

Your Lordship says, "It is unknown to us what events *Eusebius* ranged between the imprisonment of John and the miraculous feeding of the five thousand: and therefore his distribution of them may have been indefensible."* But it cannot be unknown to us what events he ranged between the imprisonment of *John* and the death of Christ, because it is all that is related by the three other evangelists, and all that your Lordship particularly objects to in my hypothesis.

In fact, your Lordship differs more from those of the ancients whom you quote against me than I do, and much more materially. I agree with them with respect to all the busy part of our Lord's life, that is, every thing in which your Lordship can pretend to find any difficulty, and I differ from them only with respect to a period in which there are few or no proper events recorded. Whereas your Lordship agrees with them with respect to neither.

Admitting what *Eusebius* and all the ancients supposed, (and on what good authority can we dispute it?) that the three first evangelists related the events of only one year of our Lord's life, can your Lordship think it credible, that they should all confine themselves to the *last* of three or four, when the whole was equally before them? Was there no event in the whole compass of the two or three preceding years that they thought worth singling out and recording? This would be more especially extraordinary in the case of *Luke*, who relates the circumstances of our Saviour's birth so very minutely, and his visit to Jerusalem at twelve years of age. A total silence in such a writer as this, to the two or three first years of the opening of our Lord's ministry, is altogether unaccountable.

Your Lordship should likewise have better considered *how* these ancient writers came to adopt this opinion, supposing it not to be true; for the account your Lordship gives of it has not, in my opinion, a sufficient appearance of probability, and is not countenanced by the only evidence you have produced in favour of it.

Your Lordship says, "It is likewise very clear that their notion was founded on a mistaken interpretation of Isaiah lxi. 2;"† meaning what he says of "the acceptable year of the Lord." Now, *à priori*, it is much more probable that a particular text should be accommodated to a well-known fact, and be imagined to refer to it, than that a fact which could not but have been well known in the apostolical age, should, in the age immediately succeeding, come

* *Reply*, p. 125. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 130. (P.)

to be disbelieved on account of the interpretation of a particular text, and a text which must have been grossly mistaken before it could have been imagined to bear such a sense. When all the prophetic language is highly figurative, who would have thought of interpreting such an expression as “the acceptable year of the Lord” literally, if it had not been countenanced by an opinion previously established on better authority, viz. that our Lord did not preach publicly more than one year?

Your Lordship produces two authorities in proof of the opinion having been derived from the prophecy, and not the interpretation of the prophecy from the opinion. The first is that of *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who himself maintained the opinion. His words, as your Lordship quotes them, are, “And that he must preach only a year is thus written. He sent me to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”* Now in this I am far from seeing any proof that the interpretation of the prophecy gave rise to the opinion. On the contrary, the construction that I should put upon it would be, that it was an attempt to accommodate a particular text to a received opinion.

Your Lordship’s other authority is from *Irenæus*, who combats the opinion, and, speaking of the *Valentinians*, who held it, says, “‘Duodecimo mense dicunt eum passum—et ex propheta tentant hoc ipsum confirmare. Scriptum enim est, vocare annum Dei acceptum.’ And again, ‘Illi autem, ut figmentum suum de eo quod scriptum est, vocare annum Dei acceptum, affirmant, dicunt eum uno anno prædicasse.’”† That is, that “he suffered in the twelfth month they endeavour to confirm from the prophet, for it is written, to proclaim the acceptable year of God. For they, to support their imagination from the preceding words, say that he preached one year.” This I even think less to your Lordship’s purpose. This writer is so far from saying that the *Valentinians* derived their opinion from the prophecy, that he evidently supposes the opinion to have had an existence previous to their interpretation of the prophecy, and only charges them with an endeavour to strengthen their opinion by the prophecy.

In short, my Lord, every thing at which your Lordship revolts in the system that I contend for, appears to have been universally received among Christians in the primitive times; and *Valentinus*, who was a man of learning, but, like too

* *Reply*, p. 130. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 131. (P.)

many others of that age, deeply tinctured with the philosophy of *Plato*, adopted it, not as having any connexion with his heresy, but only making a bad use of his ingenuity, as *Origen* did afterwards, and giving a whimsical reason for an acknowledged fact. But, my Lord, what is there in the Scriptures themselves for which whimsical reasons have not been given? And if every thing was to be rejected because some have argued weakly in support of it, nothing of the most genuine scripture history would be left.

After your Lordship's general concession, and the preceding remarks upon it, I have no occasion to scrutinize every particular evidence. I shall, therefore, only make slight remarks on a few of them, and then proceed to other general observations relating to the subject.

I wonder your Lordship should so much as mention *the Epistles of Ignatius*,* as if they could add any strength to your argument with critics of the present age, when your Lordship must know that such eminent critics as *Salmasius*, *Blondel* and *Daille* contend, not that the *larger* epistles only, but the *lesser* also are spurious. The candid *Mosheim* says, "The whole question relating to the Epistles of St. Ignatius in general seems to me to labour under much obscurity, and to be embarrassed with many difficulties."† As to the larger epistles, which your Lordship quotes after Mr. Whiston,‡ I believe that even the Papists in general reject them.

Dr. Lardner says, that, "whether the smaller epistles themselves are the genuine writings of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, is a question that has been much disputed;" though, upon the whole, he is of opinion that they are genuine, with some interpolations.§

It is true that *Tertullian*, in one place, says that "our Lord was revealed in the 12th year of Tiberius," though in another place he determines the death of our Lord to the 15th of Tiberius. But to make this writer consistent with himself, and with all the other Christian fathers, who uni-

* "For the duration of four or three years at the least, we have the express testimony of Ignatius, in his larger Epistle to the Trallians, p. 10; and that cited as his in the Chronicon Paschale at the eighteenth of Tiberius, that Christ was three decads of years old when he was baptized, and afterwards preached the Gospel three years."

The bishop, however, adds, as the opinion of *Lardner*, (in *Credib.*) "that, according to the general opinion of learned men, Ignatius's larger epistles are interpolated." *Reply*, pp. 133, 134. See *Lardner*, II. p. 68.

† *Eccl. Hist.* Cent. i. Pt. ii. Ch. ii. Sect. xx. I. p. 91.

‡ *Reply*, p. 133. (P.) See *Lardner*, II. p. 68.

§ *Credib.* Pt. ii. (P.) *Works*, II. pp. 68, 69.

formly mention the 15th, and never the 12th of Tiberius in any view, I would conjecture that, instead of XV., some transcriber separated the parts of the V., and thereby made them into II., which would make the reading XII. instead of XV. This is a mere conjecture, but I think not an unnatural one.

Since Lactantius places "the death of Christ on the 15th of Tiberius," just like *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and this was the year in which *John* preached, it is plain enough, (though, as your Lordship observes, he no where informs us "how long he thought his (Christ's) ministry lasted,")* that he could not give much more than a year to it. Indeed, it seems to have been taken so much for granted that the Gospel history was comprised within the space of a year, that, without due consideration, the early fathers include all the preaching of *John* in the same year. And in this we cannot blame them much, since the whole was not two complete years.

In the Preface to my *English Harmony*, I quoted the testimony of *Archelaus*, Bishop of Mesopotamia, in the reign of *Probus*, about A. D. 278.† This testimony, I would observe by the way, being that of an eminent bishop in the East, is certainly of more value than that of *Irenæus* in Gaul, or any of the Western fathers. After his time, *Jerome*, who resided much in the East, does not pretend to make the duration of Christ's ministry more than two years.

Valesius, as quoted by *Lardner*,‡ says, that "all the ancients compute no more than one year in Christ's ministry."

Chemnitius,§ who recites all the opinions he could collect of the ancients, and who himself supposed Christ to have preached three years and a half, begins with saying, "Vulgaris opinio etiam apud Vetustissimos, fuit, omnia illa

* *Reply*, p. 133. (P.)

† With respect to the *Critical Dissertations* prefixed to the *Harmony*, I have attended to the remarks of my friends and others, but I see nothing material to add to them, besides what will be found in my *Letter to the Bishop of Ossory*. I would only observe, that I might have added one authority more to those of the ancients, in support of my hypothesis of the duration of Christ's public ministry, which is that of *Archelaus*, Bishop of Mesopotamia, who lived, probably, in the reign of *Probus*, about the year 278, and who, as Dr. Lardner observes, "allots but one year to Christ's ministry, or at least to the most public part of it, after he had called his disciples to attend him." *Credib.* Pt. ii. (P.) *Works*, III. p. 372.

"*Archelaus*, or whoever is the writer," says, "Nec in aliquo remoratus Dominus noster Jesus intra unius anni spatium languentium multitudines reddidit sanitati mortuos luci." *Ibid.* in *Note* g.

‡ *Credib.* Pt. ii. (P.)

§ Martin Chemnitz, who died at Brunswick in 1586, aged 64.

dicta et facta, quæ in evangelica historia à baptismo Christi usque ad passionem ejus describuntur, unius tantum anni spatio comprehendenda esse.”*

I shall now proceed to remarks of a more general nature relating to this subject.

Your Lordship has made no observation on the general testimony of the ancients in favour of Jesus having been crucified when the *Gemini* were consuls, which was A. D. 29. This, I think, cannot well be invalidated; and though you say you do not propose to “discuss points of chronology, which rest on authorities beyond the compass of the Gospels themselves,”† I do not see how we can help considering them when they may be of real use to settle a point of controversy, such as we are now discussing. Now this year, A. D. 29, immediately following the proper 15th of *Tiberius*, (reckoning from the time that the years of *Augustus* ended, which, I think, must be the only proper method,) the year in which *John* began to preach, is certainly an argument for the short duration of our Lord’s ministry that well deserved your Lordship’s attention. With me, I own, it weighs considerably, as I think it must do with others, unless your Lordship shall take some method to invalidate it.

It is observable, that long after the opinion began to be formed, that our Saviour’s ministry must have continued at least two years, all the fathers, even so late as *Jerome*, still speak of our Lord’s suffering in the 15th of *Tiberius*, which is really inconsistent with it. For what could be meant by Christian writers, by the 15th of *Tiberius*, but the same year that *Luke* meant by it. In fact, it must have been copied from *Luke*. But this is the very year in which that evangelist says that *John* began to preach. There is no room, therefore, for the extension of our Lord’s ministry beyond one year.

It cannot, indeed, be strictly true, that our Saviour died in the same year in which *John* began to preach. But the early Christians, having a general idea that the whole subject of *Luke’s* Gospel, beginning with the preaching of *John*, was comprised within the space of little more than a year, they might, writing not as chronologers, but only mentioning facts incidentally, give the date that *Luke* begins with to all the events comprised within it, promiscuously.

* *Harmonia Evangeliorum*, p. 9. (P.) See *supra*, p. 18, Note *.

† *Reply*, p. 135. (P.)

Or, since all the most early writers who mention any date of the death of Christ according to the consuls, say that it happened when the *Gemini* were in that office; and their consulship was the fifteenth of the complete years of *Tiberius*, they might omit that part of the year after August in which *Augustus* died, and give it to Augustus. That some of them did compute the years of *Tiberius* in this manner, will appear presently.

Either of these suppositions will tolerably well account for the slight inaccuracy. But on no consideration can the fixing of the death of Christ to the fifteenth of *Tiberius* be consistent with the opinion of our Lord's preaching much more than a year, except that of reckoning the years of *Tiberius* in a manner different from that of *Luke*, for which none of these writers make any apology, as might have been expected, considering how much better *Luke's* Gospel was known to Christians than any other writings in which the years of *Tiberius* could be mentioned. Indeed, that any historian properly dates the years of *Tiberius*, so that any of them shall fall within the life of Augustus, is, I think, not probable. If, however, your Lordship can produce any evidence of it from history, I shall stand corrected. Notwithstanding Augustus's delegation of the rights of empire to *Tiberius*, in order to ease himself of the trouble, he was evidently supreme in the empire to the very day of his death.

Epiphanius makes the 15th year of *Tiberius* coincide with A. D. 28, so that he reckoned the years of *Tiberius* from the death of *Augustus*.*

Eusebius did the same, for he makes the year in which *Tiberius* was consul the fourth time, which was A. D. 21, to be the 7th of his reign. He, therefore, reckoned the whole year in which Augustus died to belong to him, and did not make the years of *Tiberius* to commence till the year following. Consequently, A. D. 29, in which the *Gemini* were consuls, and in which, according to the ancients, Christ suffered, was the 15th of *Tiberius*.†

Prosper, as quoted by *Valesius*, in his Notes on *Eusebius*,‡ who agrees with *Epiphanius* in making the duration of Christ's ministry two years and a half, also reckons the years of *Tiberius* from the year after the death of Augustus; and therefore, he says, that the 15th, in which the *Gemini* were consuls, though said by some to be the year in which

* *Opera*, I. p. 442. (P.) † *Hist. Eccles.* L. i. C. x. (P.) ‡ *Ibid.* (P.)

Christ suffered, could not be the year for that event, since that was the year in which he was baptized.

It is true that *Clemens Alexandrinus*, after saying,* that *Tiberius* reigned twenty-two years, says that, according to *some*, he reigned twenty-six. But it is plain, from his manner of expression, that himself, and probably all other Christians, supposed *Tiberius* to have reigned only twenty-two years, and therefore computed them from the death of *Augustus*.

The other opinion is evidently spoken of by him as held only by a few persons, and this, I believe, is the only notice that is taken of that opinion. But let some passage in any historian be produced, in which some particular year of *Tiberius*, as the first, the second, or the third, &c. is mentioned, when it shall appear that the years must be reckoned from *Tiberius* being made partner with *Augustus* in the empire. *Le Clerc*, whose hypothesis stood in need of it, only proves that *Tiberius* was admitted to imperial honours and rights before the death of *Augustus*;† but he brings no proof that the years of his reign were ever dated from that term.

On this subject, of the opinion of the ancient Christians, I would beg leave to make one remark, which appears to me to be of considerable consequence. The opinion that Christ's ministry was only of one year's duration, goes so far back into antiquity, that the origin of it cannot be traced. It was not only held by the *Valentinians*, (who seem only to have distinguished themselves by giving whimsical reasons for it, as they did for other things relating to Christ and the Gospel history,) but also by those to whom *Epiphanius* gave the name of *Alogi*, because, as he says, they questioned the authority of John's Gospel,‡ believing Christ to be a mere man, and asserting that this was the doctrine of the apostles, and of the generality of Christians till the time of *Victor*.

As these people had no name by which they were distinguished from other Christians before the time of *Epiphanius*, which was late in the fourth century, it may

* P. 339. (P.)

† *Harmony*, 1701, pp. 571—573. See *supra*, p. 22, Note †.

‡ "Serious Christians," says Lardner, "might propose difficulties relating to any books of the New Testament, with a view of discovering and being established in the truth; and some of the difficulties mentioned by *Epiphanius* might proceed from such persons. But that there was a sect or number of Christians who rejected John's Gospel and the Revelation, and ascribed both to *Cerinthus*, (whilst they received the other books of the New Testament,) I do not believe,—because we have not sufficient assurance of it from antiquity." *Works*, IX. p. 517.

be concluded that till that time they were considered as a part of the body of Christians in general, and that they were not deemed to be *heretical* till the general prevalence of other opinions, introduced from Heathenism, gradually diminishing their numbers, made it necessary to distinguish them from the now more numerous body by some peculiar appellation.

Had the peculiar opinions, as they are now considered, of these *Alogi*, as well as those of the *Nazarenes*, or *Ebionites* (who likewise held that Christ was a mere man) had an origin after the times of the apostles, it would not have been difficult to trace it; and, like other sects, they would immediately have got some distinguishing denomination, either assumed by themselves, or given them by others; whereas these *Alogi* passed undistinguished in the common mass of Christians till the fourth century. I therefore think their opinions highly respectable, and not to be rejected without good authority.

I will allow your Lordship, however, to suppose that it may bias me in favour of this particular opinion of the *Alogi*, that they were *Unitarians*; as, on the other hand, the same circumstance may contribute a little, without being perceived, to give your Lordship, who is a *Trinitarian*, some little prejudice against it. Being *men*, we are all subject to these influences, and if we are not aware of this bias ourselves, others will suppose it for us.

Your Lordship says, that by the “notation of A. D. 30” you “mean the true year of Christ’s life.”* This certainly required some explanation, because, as far as I know, it is a mode of notation that has not been used before. But I wish your Lordship had considered how the date you assign to the commencement of Christ’s preaching would have agreed with any particular date of the birth or death of Christ. I do not, however, wish to draw your Lordship into any chronological discussion, for which you may have no taste, or which you may think unnecessary. I only mention the easy agreement of the different dates of the birth and death of Christ, with the duration of his ministry on my hypothesis, as an argument in its favour. I indeed make Christ to have died in the thirty-sixth year of his age, and therefore to have been near thirty-five when he began his ministry; but this corresponds sufficiently well with an historian observing, in general, that he was *about thirty*.

* Reply, p. 134. (P.)

SECTION II.

Of the Conduct of Luke in giving a Date to the preaching of John the Baptist.

I HAD laid considerable stress on the inference which I said was necessarily drawn from the date that occurs in the Gospel of *Luke*, who fixes with remarkable circumstantiality the time of the commencement of *John's* preaching, but assigns no date to the death of Christ, an event of much more consequence. I therefore say, that his conduct is not consistent, but on the supposition of one of these events being, in his idea, so connected with the other, in the course of his narrative, as that the date of it might easily be inferred from the date of the other, which I assert, from the tenor of his Gospel, to be the case ; and in this, as your Lordship must, I think, acknowledge, I have the sanction of all the ancients.

It was their unanimous opinion, that only one year intervened between the imprisonment of John and the death of Jesus. And what is there in the history of *Luke*, from the commencement of the preaching of John to his imprisonment, that is, to Jesus's journey to Galilee, which followed immediately upon it, that can be supposed, by any reasonable construction, to take up more than a few months ? It is all related in his third chapter, and the thirteen first verses of the fourth, which contains an account of nothing more than the preaching of John before the baptism of Jesus, and the temptation.

Now certainly, my Lord, whatever might really be the case, *Luke* relates nothing of the events of this interval that can be supposed to take up a year ; and this I see, by your *Harmony*, is your Lordship's own idea of the fact. You date the beginning of John's preaching in A. D. 29, and Jesus's journey to Galilee consequent on the imprisonment of John, about eight months after the passover, in the year following, including your own eight months' stay of Jesus in Judea. And as your Lordship is disposed to shorten that stay to about four months, you can hardly make it a year in all.

In your Lordship's letter to me you seem to comprise all the events from the beginning of John's preaching to the

first passover, in the space "of about six months,"* which with the four more for the stay of Jesus in Judea, make but ten in all. It will, therefore, follow from the testimony of the ancients, and your Lordship's own concessions together, that Luke *has* given a date by which the death of Christ may be sufficiently determined, viz. to the year immediately following that in which *John* began to preach.

Your Lordship says, "I rather think that St. Luke furnished such circumstantial dates to shew in what a remarkable period of the world, in how very fit a time, the Gospel began to be preached. This sufficed for the great purposes of Christianity, without precision as to other events."†

But, my Lord, *Luke* himself says nothing of all this. And considering how very circumstantial the date is, I cannot think it at all probable that he had any such idea. If he had thought that precise year so proper for the beginning of *John's* preaching, and he had mentioned it with that view, he must either have supposed it to be *obviously* so, and therefore that it did not require to be pointed out, or he would have informed us wherein the propriety lay. Now can your Lordship say that the Gospel might not as properly have begun to be preached in the 14th or 16th, as in the 15th of *Tiberius*, or when Lysanias had not been tetrarch of Abilene, &c.? It is plain your Lordship has no idea of the importance of that particular year, because you say you cannot determine whether it was the 15th, reckoned from the time when *Tiberius* was admitted partner in the empire, or from his being sole emperor.

Had this evangelist contented himself with saying that the Gospel was first preached in the reign of *Tiberius*, or when the world was at peace, &c. &c. &c., there might have been some colour for your Lordship's conjecture. At present I see none at all. Besides, there are different epochas with respect to the preaching of the Gospel, and the first, or the preaching of *John*, does not seem to be of more importance than others that succeeded. Was not the beginning of the preaching of Christ himself, or at least his death, of as much consequence? And was not the descent of the Holy Spirit at *pentecost* as important as any of them all?

In fact, my Lord, *Luke* appears evidently to have given a date to his history, just as other historians have done to theirs, without any particular regard to the importance of one event

* *Reply*, p. 163. (P.) † *Ibid.* p. 137. (P.)

more than another, but merely to shew its place in universal time, and its relation to other events. But one date would not have been sufficient for this purpose, if, in his own idea, the whole narrative had not been so closely connected, that the place of all the important events might be determined from the date that he had given.

Without this idea, and especially on the idea of his having omitted whole years without any note to indicate the omission, the whole compass and termination of his history would be altogether undefined, and one of the most important events in it would have no date at all. Consequently his giving so circumstantial a date to the beginning of it would be very imperfectly answered, and he would therefore be inconsistent with himself.

Your Lordship says, from *Newton*,* (though I do not see its perfect consistency with what you had just observed before,) that “the times of the birth and passion of Christ were not material to religion;”† but they were as material as the commencement of *John’s* preaching, and if some “remarkable period” was requisite for the one, I should expect periods as remarkable for the other. Upon your Lordship’s idea of *Luke’s* history, then, he must either have thought them not equally material, or he must have dated the one for some other reasons than its being so very material.

SECTION III.

Of the Ignorance of Herod, and of other Jews, concerning Jesus, at the Time of the Death of John the Baptist.

I HAD represented it‡ as a great difficulty on your Lordship’s scheme, that *Herod* seems not to have heard of Jesus till after the death of *John*; though, according to your Lordship’s hypothesis, he had preached publicly almost two years, and the greatest part of the time alone, John being in prison. Upon my hypothesis, Jesus had not been so much exposed to public notice more than between four and five weeks; and therefore I suppose, that being, probably, like other kings and great men, engaged in a multiplicity of business or pleasure, he might not have heard of Jesus.

This your Lordship is pleased to call “a loose, topical

* On *Daniel*, pp. 144—147

† *Reply*, p. 157.

‡ *Supra*, p. 128.

argument,"* that at best it is no more than a negative argument, and that you "find this maxim laid down in books on the art of reasoning, that *Testimonium non valet negativè.*"†

That the argument is *topical*, that is, relating to the subject or topic, is certain; but that it is therefore *loose*, or of little moment, does not follow. And your Lordship must know that, whatever may be laid down in books on the art of reasoning, a negative argument may be so circumstanced, as to be fairly entitled to more regard than some positive ones.

In another place, your Lordship vouchsafes to call it an "ingenious argument," and acknowledges that it points to a difficulty in your Lordship's scheme.‡ But I conceive your Lordship did not see it in its full force, when you said, "May not the question be fairly asked, whether your scheme is not as strongly affected by this difficulty as mine?"§ But if an interval of *five weeks*, and one of almost *two years*, makes no real difference in this case, I am unable to conceive what can. It is true, it is not a difference, as it is called, in kind, but it is such a difference in degree as, in this case, is almost as decisive. But I will consider more particularly all the circumstances in which you say our two schemes agree in this respect; and I shall, at the same time, point out to your Lordship the circumstances in which they differ.

It is true, as your Lordship says, that "we must both suppose that Jesus publicly wrought miracles at the first passover," which must have contributed to make him known. But I do not suppose, with your Lordship, that he cleansed the temple at that time, and as we are not informed what the miracles were, we cannot judge of the greatness or notoriety of them.

It will certainly be somewhat favourable to my hypothesis, as well as your Lordship's, that *Herod* should not have been at Jerusalem at this passover. But, my Lord, the chance of his being absent from *seven successive feasts* (when, like every other Jew, he was under obligation to attend them all) or only from *one particular feast*,|| is much more than seven to one. We know he did attend at that on which our Lord was crucified.

We both suppose that Jesus made disciples in *Judea* after this passover, and for that time to have made more disciples than *John*. But I suppose him to have spent only a *few days*

* *Reply*, p. 104. (P.) "Not to be placed in the scale against positive internal evidence in the Gospels themselves." *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.* p. 98. (P.) § *Ibid.* p. 101. (P.)

|| "The difficulties peculiar to me are, that I must suppose seven Jewish feasts to have elapsed instead of one." *Ibid.* pp. 103, 104.

there, and not *several months*; and as no particular miracles are mentioned, those disciples might be the effect of John's preaching in those parts, as much as of his own preaching and working miracles.

We both suppose Jesus to have preached and worked miracles in Galilee, *Herod's* own kingdom. But I leave out at least two of the circuits that your Lordship supposes Jesus to have made through all the cities of Galilee; I reduce the term of them from *months* to *days*, and the whole period of this preaching in Galilee from near *two years*, to about *three weeks*. And certainly the probability of Herod's having heard of Jesus will depend much upon the time that these transactions took up.

Had *Herod* been absent, as your Lordship conjectures, on an expedition against *Aretas*, it would certainly have taken up a few weeks, and would probably have been at this very time of the year, when Jesus was in Galilee, viz. from the *passover* to *pentecost*. But it is very improbable that an expedition against so neighbouring a prince would extend through a winter, the territories of both being very inconsiderable. This expedition, therefore, might have been very convenient to my hypothesis, but cannot at all serve your Lordship's.

But, in fact, we read of no more than *one* expedition that *Herod* made against *Aretas*, and this followed the death of *John*. For according to *Josephus*, the Jews thought that his defeat in that expedition was a judgment from God upon him for putting John to death.*

This single expedition against *Aretas* seems to have been the only one in which he ever engaged; and *Josephus* expressly says, that *Herod* was a great lover of his ease, and that he had no great opinion of the court of Rome; so that it was with difficulty that his wife prevailed upon him to undertake that voyage thither which proved so fatal to him.†

Had *Herod* made a journey to Rome at this time (as your Lordship likewise conjectures might have been the case), it would probably have been noticed by *Josephus*, who mentions two of his journeys thither. So very circumstantial is *Josephus's* history of this period; and journeys to Rome, by

* *Antiq. L. xviii. C. v. Sect. ii. (P.)* "Some of the *Jews* thought the destruction of *Herod's* army came from God: and that very justly as a punishment of what he did against *John* that was called the Baptist: for *Herod* slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the *Jews* to exercise virtue; both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God; and so to come to baptism." *Whiston's Translation*, p. 280.

† *War, B. ii. Ch. ix. Sect. vi.*

sovereign princes, were undertaken so very seldom, and then upon such urgent business, of a political nature, that I think we may presume, that *Josephus* not mentioning this journey, which would have been so very convenient to your Lordship's hypothesis, is a proof that no such journey took place. We read of one journey that Herod made to Rome before the last fatal one. But it was at his return from this journey that he married *Herodias*. This, therefore, must have preceded his interview with *John*.

Considering, therefore, that this journey to Rome was prior to *Herod's* acquaintance with *John*, and his expedition against *Aretas* after the death of *John*, it is almost a certainty that, in all the interval between the imprisonment and the death of *John*, Herod was in his own dominions. The preparations, however, for this single campaign, which might take place in the autumn of this year, immediately following the death of *John*, will help my hypothesis, though it cannot serve that of your Lordship.

What *Josephus* says of *Philip*, Herod's brother, which your Lordship quotes,* viz. "That he lived wholly in the country tributary to him," is mentioned by the historian as a proof of his moderation, and of his love of ease and quiet, and therefore probably refers to his engaging in no wars, and making no journeys to Rome, as other princes did; but cannot imply that either Herod, or any prince in those times, lived much out of their own countries. Herod, I doubt not, excepting his journeys to Rome, and the expedition against *Aretas*, neither of which, as I have shewn, could have happened in the interval in question (and this expedition could not carry him far from his own territories, or be of long continuance), lived in general at home, the duties of his station necessarily requiring it, as those of the Roman governor required him to be at Jerusalem.

Your Lordship conjectures, that Herod might "usually reside in Peræa beyond Jordan."† But this was in the neighbourhood of the very country where your Lordship supposes Christ to have preached publicly for several months, before and after the imprisonment of *John*.

Your Lordship says, that "a short interval, very thick sown with uncommon events, seems more remarkable than a long one through which the same events are dispersed. And when the attendance of multitudes on an eminent person is hardly intermitted, a jealous governor, and his adherents

* *Reply*, p. 105. (P.)

† *Ibid.* (P.)

throughout his dominions, are more likely to be alarmed with apprehensions of tumult and sedition.”*

But your Lordship cannot suppose that our Saviour either resided at any place, or travelled from one place to another, without preaching, working miracles, and, consequently, drawing multitudes after him. And since *John* (xxi. 25) says even that “the world itself could not contain the books that should be written,” if every thing that our Lord did or said should be recorded, we are naturally led to think that he spent the time of his public ministry in a pretty uniform manner, except when the crowds of his hearers occasionally obliged him to withdraw himself from public notice for a few days. This, at least, appears to have been the plan of his conduct, till it was generally known that he assumed the character of the *Messiah*, which was not till some time after the death of *John*.

We do not find that our Lord ever omitted an opportunity of working any benevolent miracle, though he disappointed the Jews [*Mark* viii. 11, 12] of their “sign from heaven.” Though “he did not many mighty works” at Nazareth, [*Matt.* xiii. 58,] he, nevertheless, laid his hands upon a few sick persons, and cured them.” [*Mark* vi. 5.] Probably no more were brought to him. Considering, therefore, that so many more miracles must have been wrought in the interval between the imprisonment and the death of *John*, on your Lordship’s hypothesis than upon mine, the notoriety of them must, upon the whole, have been greater. Besides they were all of so extraordinary a nature, that certainly the chance of some of them, at least, reaching the ear of *Herod* must have been greater, in the space of two years, than in that of three or four weeks.

To what I say of the small size of the country of Judea and Galilee, † as favourable to the communication of intelligence, your Lordship says, “It is not merely the size of a country, but the intercourse between places, which must be considered, when the question is, whether the knowledge of facts is likely to be propagated throughout it.”‡

But, my Lord, a country so exceedingly populous as, by the account of *Josephus*, Galilee was, cannot but be favourable to the propagation of intelligence. Its several towns resemble the different parts of one extensive metropolis, each of which is almost within the hearing of the next. And, as your Lordship acknowledges, the public feasts of the Jews

* *Reply*, p. 102. (P.) † *Supra*, p. 129. ‡ *Reply*, pp. 105, 106. (P.)

were such a means of communication as no other country in the world was ever possessed of. Now in this very interval between the imprisonment and the death of *John*, there was not, according to my hypothesis, so much as *one* of these public feasts; whereas, on your Lordship's, there were no less than *seven*. How much more easily then may it be supposed, that the fame of Jesus might not reach *Herod* on my hypothesis than on that of your Lordship!

To make your hypothesis more consistent with the ignorance of *Herod* concerning Jesus, your Lordship speaks of our Lord's "lowliness and prudence."* But I do not see that this is very consistent with your Lordship's supposition of his cleansing the temple at the first passover. But let it be as great as your Lordship pleases, the object of his withdrawing himself from public notice was only to avoid occasional inconveniencies, and was often ineffectual. For we read, that the more he enjoined silence on particular persons, the more industriously they published his benevolent miracles in their favour.

Your Lordship observes, "that *some* besides Herod when they heard of Jesus, thought that John was risen from the dead:" and that "this opinion was likewise adopted by many of the Jewish people."† But this observation is certainly unfavourable to your Lordship's purpose. For though you say, that you "attend to the tenour of the Gospel history, and follow wherever it leads," and that you are "little concerned about the inattention or avocations of Herod and his friends; about the strange doubts of caprice, or the strange resolves of a guilty conscience,"‡ it cannot surely be a matter of indifference to this question, that *many* of the Jewish people as well as *Herod*, entertained doubts whether Jesus might not be "*John* risen from the dead."

All these doubters cannot be supposed to have been absent from their country on expeditions to Rome, or against *Aretas*, or to have neglected their attendance at the public feasts for the space of near two years. Whereas in a populous country great numbers may be supposed to have been so inattentive to what passed in the short interval that on my hypothesis there was between the imprisonment and death of *John*, in which no public feast intervened, as, for a short time, to entertain some doubts about the matter.

Your Lordship speaks of it as a difficulty on both our

* *Reply*, p. 109. (P.)

† *Ibid.* pp. 113, 114. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 114, 115. (P.)

schemes, that *John* did not speak of Jesus to *Herod*. But, my Lord, it should be considered that John had two distinct commissions, though the one was subservient to the other, viz. the announcing the approach of the *Messiah*, and the preaching of repentance. We read of soldiers and publicans applying to him, to learn how they should conduct themselves. Now the application of Herod might be of the same nature, and John might not think it necessary to say any thing to him more than to them, about the Messiah; especially as this was sufficiently the subject of his public preaching. Besides, at the beginning of his preaching, John had not seen Jesus, and probably did not know at what distance of time he was to follow him; so that his having seen Jesus might have been after his interview with Herod.

I think it no difficulty on either of our schemes, though your Lordship considers it as one, * that *John* in his prison should hear of the works of Jesus, though *Herod* did not hear of them in his palace. The disciples of John were much more likely to be attentive to Jesus, than any person belonging to the court of Herod.†

SECTION IV.

Of the Interpolation of the word Passover, in John vi. 4.

IN the preceding Sections I have chiefly endeavoured to support the arguments for my own hypothesis against the attacks of your Lordship. In those that immediately follow, I shall endeavour to defend myself against your Lordship's arguments.

You are not satisfied with what, it must be acknowledged, the hypothesis I contend for absolutely requires, viz. the interpolation of the word *πασχα* in *John* vi. 4, because all the present manuscripts have that reading. You add, "Shall we then oppose to this, the conjecture of G. J. Vossius, Mr. Mann, Bp. Pearce, and Dr. Priestley, some of whom have

* *Reply*, p. 103. (P.)

† "Il se peut faire facilement," says *Le Clerc*, (on *Matt.* xiv. 1,) "que ce Prince plongé dans les délices, et environné de gens qui lui ressembloient, n'entendit parler des miracles de Jésus-Christ.—Les gens de cour ont très-rarement du goût, pour ce qui ne flatte pas leurs passions, qui ne regardent que les richesses, les honneurs, et les plaisirs, et ne s'informent que de ce qui y a du rapport." *Le Nouv. Test.* 1703, p. 60. (It might easily happen to that prince, plunged in dissipation, and surrounded by such, alone, as resembled him, never to have heard of the miracles of Jesus Christ. Courtiers, indeed, very rarely cultivate a taste for what neither flatters their passions, nor contributes to their riches, honours, or sensual delights; objects to which their curiosity is chiefly excited.)

been imperceptibly led to view this matter through a medium unfavourable to the discovery of truth ?” *

Bishop Pearce, however, cannot be said to have been of this number ; and a liberal and judicious critic, though he will not be wanting in a due respect for manuscripts, will not be a slave to them ; and it is of itself, independently of any hypothesis concerning the duration of Christ’s ministry, exceedingly improbable that the present should have been the original reading. This, however, has been so fully stated already, † that I shall not urge it any farther. But as your Lordship gives me a quotation from *Vossius* on this subject, I shall in return refer your Lordship to the late Mr. Bowyer’s *observations* on this text, in which he approves of the omission of the word *πασχα*, and adds other things in support of Mr. Mann’s hypothesis in general, ‡ which I did not know that he was any favourer of before.

Your Lordship says that the *greenness of the grass* at the time to which the events mentioned in this chapter belong, is an argument that it was immediately before a passover, and therefore that the present was probably the true reading. § I readily acknowledge that this is a circumstance in your Lordship’s favour. But though the grass in general be burned up in May, in the country of *Judea*, there might be particular places in the neighbourhood of a fresh-water lake where it was not so ; and besides, I have a resource which your Lordship has not in this case. For I can easily suppose that *Mark*, who is not known to have been present at the trans-

* *Reply*. pp. 117—119. (P.)

† See *supra*, p. 17.

‡ “ John had spoken of the passover, Ch. ii. 13. If he had mentioned it here again, would there be any need of his adding an explanation of the word ? G. Vossius, therefore, (*De Annis Christi*, p. 75,) with great reason, would leave out το *πασχα*, which was probably a marginal note of one who thought to explain what feast of the Jews was meant, and soon crept into the text, with as little reason as at Ch. ii. 23 and xix. 14 ; whereas the feast, said to be approaching, was that which Jesus, Ch. v. 1, went to celebrate ; and that is, by Cyril, Chrysostom, and Theophylact, supposed to be *pentecost*. The year of Christ’s ministry is distinguished by its principal feasts. I. The Passover after his baptism, Ch. vi. 13, Per. Jul. 4738, A.D. 5. II. Pentecost, Ch. vi. 4, (as now amended,) and v. 1. III. The Feast of Tabernacles, Ch. vii. 2—14. IV. The Feast of Dedication, Ch. x. 22. V. The last Passover, in which he suffered, Ch. xi. 55, xii. 1, xiii. 1, Per. Jul. 4739, A.D. 26, seven years before the time fixed upon by Usher, Prideaux, &c. N. Mann, as above, p. 173, Lat. and see Diss. II. Ch. xxiv.

§ “ Mr. Whiston would confute this hypothesis, by shewing that Christ travelled, during his ministry, above 1100 English miles ; which, considering his stay at the end of each journey, must have taken up above four years. In this he does but beg the question in dispute : for the journeys must be first agreed on before any argument can be drawn from their number. He knew his adversary’s Harmony considerably lessened them ; who urges the improbability of Christ’s twice turning the money-changers out of the temple, without opposition.” *Conject. Emend.* 1763, pp. 50, 51.

§ See *Reply*, p. 120.

action, and who is the only historian that mentions this circumstance, might be mistaken with respect to it.

You add, that “if we expunge this verse, there will be want of force in the observation, John vii. 1:” * “After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.” Now, besides that I transpose the 5th and 6th *chapters*, and therefore your Lordship’s argument may perhaps not affect me at all, I really do not apprehend wherein the force of this observation lies, as you do not explain it. I must, therefore, wait for your Lordship’s next letter before I reply to it. I suppose the feast of *pentecost* to have preceded what is related in this 7th *chapter*, and it was at this feast that the Jews sought to kill Jesus, as we are informed in the fifth *chapter*, which I make to precede this; and this circumstance is an argument in favour of that transposition.

I had observed that *Irenæus* cannot be supposed to have had the reading of this *πασχα* in his copy of *John’s* Gospel, because he does not avail himself of it in his answer to the *Valentinians*. In reply to this, your Lordship says, “*Irenæus* only proposed to mention how often, at the season of the passover, our Lord, after his baptism, *went up* to Jerusalem; and therefore the mention of John vi. 4, was not to his immediate purpose; because this very evangelist informs us, *ch. vii. 1*, that Jesus did not attend that festival.” †

But, my Lord, what was the reason for this writer’s enumerating the passovers at which our Lord gave his attendance at Jerusalem, but only to shew that there *were* so many passovers in the course of his ministry? I wish your Lordship would reperuse what *Irenæus* says on this subject, and consider his immediate object. You must then perceive, that our Lord’s *attendance* at the passover is of no consequence at all to his purpose, which was simply (as he was professedly combating the *Valentinian* opinion at large) to note all the passovers that occurred in the course of our Lord’s public ministry. Considering, therefore, how intent he manifestly was to collect all the evidence he could, against the opinion of *Valentinus*, and that he neither in this place, nor any other, makes the least mention of it, it may, I think, be safely presumed that he found no such reading.

Your Lordship cannot deny but that the urging of this *passover* would have been greatly to his purpose. Why else

* *Reply*, pp. 120, 121. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 121. (P.)

does your Lordship make so great account of it, in maintaining the same argument? You are sensible that it is the most decisive circumstance that can be urged in the case. Had Mr. Mann admitted this passover, there would not have been the least colour for his hypothesis. He could never have entertained the idea of it. Account then, if you can, for the silence of *Irenæus* with respect to this passover, when it could not but have been of as much use to his argument as to your Lordship's, for they are the very same.

Your Lordship says, that he only enumerates the passovers at which our Lord *attended*, but why did he not think of enumerating those at which he did *not* attend; when, if he was capable of thinking and writing at all, he could not but see that these would have been just as much to his purpose as the others; because every passover, whether Jesus attended at it or not, adds a year to the duration of his ministry, to extend which was his only and immediate object. I must therefore conclude that, as he has not noted this passover, though he professedly went over the Gospel history, and especially that of *John*, with that view, he found no such reading in his copy, and consequently that the present reading is an interpolation since his time.

The enumeration of the different passovers (though he does not pretend to find any so called by any evangelist besides *two*) is at the very beginning of *Lib. ii. Cap. ix.*, the title of which is “*Ostensio quod uno anno non præconcionaverit Dominus post baptismum, sed omnem habuisse ætatem;*” that is, *to shew that our Lord did not, after his baptism, preach only one year, but employed every age in it.* And therefore, after the enumeration of all the passovers, he proceeds to give reasons why Christ must have preached in every stage of life, even to advanced years, (*provecior ætas,*) which he states as commencing at forty or fifty years. And this age, meaning probably the latter, he asserts, from the testimony of those who conversed with them, that *John* and the other apostles actually gave to Jesus.

But none of this good man's commentators pay any regard to this account, but consider the whole as proceeding from his excessive zeal to confute the *Valentinians*. “*Candide autem*” (says *Feuardentius*, as quoted by *Grabe* on the place) “*de beatissimo Martyre sentiendum, quod impetu ipso refellendi Gnosticos, qui annum trigessimum primum illum non excessisse dicebant, in partem contrariam delatus est. Sanctissimis enim et doctissimis hoc non raro contigisse, ipsa luce manifestius est.*”

That our readers may judge for themselves, I shall translate the whole passage from *Irenæus*.

“It is very extraordinary, that they who pretend to have penetrated into the deep things of God, should not have searched the Gospels, to find at how many passovers Jesus, after his baptism, went up to Jerusalem, as it is a custom with the Jews to assemble at Jerusalem from all countries every year for this purpose. First he went to this feast of passover after he had changed the water into wine at Cana in Galilee; when, as it is written, *many believed on him, seeing the miracles that he did*, as is related by John the disciple of our Lord.

“Then, withdrawing himself, he retired to Samaria, when he held the conversation with the Samaritan woman, and, being absent, cured, by a word, the son of the centurion, saying, *Go, thy son liveth*.

“After this he went a second time up to Jerusalem at the feast of passover, when he cured the paralytic person who had lain at the pool thirty-eight years, bidding him rise and take up his bed. Then, retiring over the sea of Tiberias, and and being followed by a great multitude, he fed them with five loaves, so that twelve baskets of fragments remained.

“Again, when he had raised Lazarus from the dead, and the Pharisees laid wait for him, he retired to the city of Ephrem, and thence coming to Bethany six days before the passover, and going from Bethany to Jerusalem, and there having eaten the passover, the following day he suffered. That these *three* seasons of passover cannot be comprised in *one year* must be acknowledged by every body. And that the month in which the passover is celebrated is the first month, and not the twelfth, they who boast that they know all things might have learned from Moses.”

“Their interpretation therefore of the *one year*, and of the *twelfth month*, is proved to be false, so that they must either abandon this interpretation, or the gospel. Otherwise, how did our Lord preach only one year?”

What can be more evident from this, than that our Lord’s *attendance* at the passover here mentioned was a circumstance of no moment whatever to this writer’s argument; since he only means to shew that there were, at least, *three passovers* in the course of his ministry, and therefore that it must have extended beyond one year?

It must also, I think, be very evident, that if this writer had found any mention of another *passover* in *John* vi. 4, he would not have failed to note it. For his hypothesis was

not that Christ preached *only two years*, but that he continued preaching to an advanced age.

Grabe's note upon this passage is as follows: "Irenæus is mistaken when he supposed the feast of the Jews mentioned John v. 1, to be a passover. But a little after, in the sixth chapter, which our author also cites, there is, at the fourth verse, express mention of the approach of another Jewish passover, from which the second year of Christ's preaching is clearly collected." In my opinion, *Irenæus* would have been as quick-sighted in discovering this passover as Mr. Grabe, being much more interested to do it; and his not noting it is a proof with me that, in his copy of that Gospel, and probably in all the copies of his time, there was no such passover mentioned.

Your Lordship says farther, that "another reason for Irenæus's silence may be assigned. He might possibly think that the passover alluded to was that at which Christ suffered." *

I acknowledge that *Irenæus* has shewn himself capable of supposing very strange things, especially that Christ preached till he was of advanced age; yet I do not think he was capable of taking the passover in *John* vi. 4, to be that at which Christ suffered, because several other Jewish feasts are distinctly mentioned between this and the last passover. *John* vii. 2: "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand." x. 22: "And it was at Jerusalem, the feast of dedication, and it was winter." xi. 55: "And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand."

This last was evidently that at which our Lord suffered. Could it be supposed, then, that this writer should mention the same passover so long before, as a feast *at hand*, when a feast of *tabernacles*, and another of *dedication*, intervened, (our Lord's attendance at each of which are distinctly mentioned, and his conversation with the Jews at each of them recited,) and so long after speak of it again as a feast *at hand*? This is a supposition so very improbable, that I really think even *Irenæus* incapable of it. I therefore still conclude that *Irenæus* found no passover mentioned in this place. His want of passovers was such, that he would certainly have caught at it.

I was far from denying, as your Lordship seems to suppose, † that *Eusebius* extended the ministry of Christ to three years. I have always considered him as the first known author of that opinion. But this he might think to

* *Reply*, p. 122.

† *Ibid.* p. 124. (P.)

be consistent with what he also says, that the three first evangelists record the actions of our Saviour for one year only, viz. after the imprisonment of *John the Baptist*; since he might think that he preached more than two years before the imprisonment of John. But I say he could not have supposed this, and at the same time have had the reading of *πασχα* in his copy of the text in dispute, or have given that attention to the Gospel of John which he seems to have done; because this passover must necessarily fall between the imprisonment of John and the death of Christ.

It must have done so according to the Gospel of *John* himself. For we learn from *Matthew* and *Mark* that Jesus left Judea to go into Galilee on his hearing of the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and *John* (iv. 3) mentions this leaving of Judea; and it is not till after relating the particulars of this journey, and, as your Lordship supposes, his return to some other feast at Jerusalem, and back again to Galilee, that this other passover is mentioned. This opinion, therefore, of *Eusebius*, viz. that the preaching of Christ after the imprisonment of John was comprised within the space of a year, is inconsistent with his having the word *πασχα* in his copy of *John* vi. 4. It was not, therefore, till after the time of *Eusebius* that the interpolation of that word came to be general in the copies of *John's* Gospel.

You say, "The quotation from Lardner, in my preface, shews that, upon re-examination, Eusebius did not overlook it * (the word *πασχα*) in *John* vi. 4. The whole passage from Dr. Lardner is as follows: "Eusebius says, 'The other three evangelists have recorded the actions of our Saviour for one year only, after the imprisonment of John the Baptist.' Jerome speaks to the like purpose, in his book of illustrious men; † but it should have been said 'one year and somewhat more,' meaning the time and actions of our Lord's most public ministry. For it seems to me, that the ancients supposed our Lord's ministry to have lasted, in the whole, somewhat more than two years. ‡ Eusebius, indeed, computed our Lord's ministry to have consisted of three years and a half, and supposed St. John's Gospel to have in it four passovers. He seems to have been the first Christian who advanced that opinion, and he is now generally followed by harmonizers of the Gospels, and by ecclesiastical historians." §

* Notes, p. 27. (P.)

† Dr. Lardner adds, "just now transcribed," referring to (VI. 189) where he had translated Jerome as saying, "but one year of our Lord's ministry."

‡ "As was shewn, II. pp. 423, 424." Lardner,

§ Supplement. (P.) Works, VI. pp. 217, 218.

In his *Credibility*, he says of *Eusebius*, that according to him, “our Lord’s ministry was above three years, and not quite four years complete. But his argument there alleged for that opinion, from the number of Jewish high-priests during the period of Christ’s preaching, is absurd, and groundless, as appears from Josephus: though *Eusebius* endeavours to support his opinion from that Jewish author.” *

I must, however, observe, that it does not appear that *Eusebius* read *πασχα* in the passage in question. For, though he makes so many passovers in our Lord’s ministry, he does not quote this as his authority for any of them; how difficult soever we may imagine it to be to make out so many passovers without *that*. And, as I have observed, his saying that from the imprisonment of *John* to the last passover was only one year, is plainly inconsistent with his supposing that there was any passover mentioned in that place.

Dr. Lardner says, that “*Epiphanius* says, there are two passovers in our Lord’s ministry according to St. John’s Gospel, and that he suffered at the third passover.—Therefore he did not think the *feast of the Jews* mentioned John v. 1, to be a passover.” † He should rather have said, that two passovers are mentioned in the beginning of the first part of John’s Gospel, and that he suffered in a third. And I rather think, since *Epiphanius* makes no mention of the *passover* in John vi. 4, though it would have been as much to his purpose as to that of *Irenæus*, and he writes much more largely on the subject, that, like *Irenæus*, he *did* consider the feast mentioned John v. 1, to be the second passover.

It must be impossible to trace the precise time when any particular interpolation was made, in books of which there were so many copies and translations, as there were of the *New Testament*; as it would first be inserted in the margin of some one copy, then get into the text of one that was taken from it, and would probably be a long time before it became general.

That this word *πασχα*, in John vi. 4, was subsequent to the time of *Irenæus*, I think indisputable, and probably too that of *Eusebius* and *Epiphanius*; but I find it quoted, as we now have it, by *Chrysostom*. ‡

Indeed it is most natural to suppose that this feast would begin to be considered as a passover after it was generally

* *Works*, IV. p. 246.

† *Credibility*. (P.) *Works*, IV. p. 318.

‡ In his homily on the 7th of John, VII. p. 245, in the edition of *Fronto Ducæus* and *Commelin*. (P.)

supposed that some passover did intervene between the first, mentioned by *John*, and the last, in which Christ suffered. And though *Irenæus* considered the feast, mentioned *John* v. 1, to be a *passover*, Dr. Lardner observes, that afterwards it was generally thought to be the *pentecost*, * after which the suspicion of a passover fell naturally on the feast mentioned *John* vi. 4.

It should seem, that whatever time any of the *ancients* gave to the duration of our Lord's ministry above one year and a few months, they supposed the whole of it to have preceded the busy part of it related by the three first evangelists, and consequently to have preceded the imprisonment of *John the Baptist*. And therefore, on whatever other reasons their opinion was supported, it did not require the feast mentioned *John* vi. 4, to be a *passover*, nay was inconsistent with it; since, as I have observed already, this feast must have fallen in the very busiest part of the ministry. In this your Lordship must agree with me, for you make it the *third* passover in our Lord's ministry, and to have happened after the death of *John the Baptist*, and the return of the twelve from their mission, which is a disposition essentially different from that of the ancients.

SECTION V.

Of the Transposition of the 5th and 6th Chapters of the Gospel of John.

YOUR Lordship cannot be reconciled to the transposition of the 5th and 6th chapters of John's Gospel, though I think it very probable in itself, as well as agreeable to my particular hypothesis. I should even think that the bare reading of the several *chapters* in the connexion proposed (in the manner that Mr. Mann has exhibited them †) might be sufficient to satisfy any impartial person.

According to our present copies, the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th *chapter* connect very ill. For, at the end of the former chapter Christ is at Jerusalem, and the next begins with these words: "After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee," as if he had been somewhere

* "Theophylact did not compute our Saviour's ministry to have lasted three years and more, but somewhat less than three years: accordingly, he does not suppose the Jewish feast mentioned by St. John v. 1, to have been a *passover*, but some other feast, possibly *pentecost*, as he conjectures." *Works*, V. p. 331.

† See *supra*, p. 17, *Note*.

in *Galilee* immediately before, and had only that sea to cross, which will be the case if we connect the end of the 6th chapter with the beginning of the 5th; for he was then at *Capernaum*, close by the sea of Galilee.

As ill do the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th *chapter* connect, as they now stand. At the end of the 6th chapter Christ is in Capernaum in *Galilee*, and in the first verse of the 7th chapter we read, "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." This surely implies that he was in *Judea* immediately before, as he is at the end of the 5th chapter, which I would connect with the 7th.

If omissions, interpolations, and transpositions, had been things unknown, or very rare, in our present copies of ancient writings, there would be some difficulty in admitting this. But we know, my Lord, they are common things, and that the sacred writings are by no means exempt from them, in whatever manner they have happened. I think it very easy to account for them.

But your Lordship says, "the ancient manner of writing on skins of parchment, joined together and rolled up, is unfavourable to the idea of transposition in general; and as the division into chapters is of modern date, the particular transposition of one chapter into the place of another carries less plausibility with it." *

Now it appears to me that transpositions might much more easily be made by the ancients, who wrote only on *one side* of the different skins of parchment, &c. and afterwards fastened them together, † than by the moderns, who write on both sides of the paper. After an ancient book was completely written, and put together, it was easy to transpose

* *Reply*, p. 116. (P.)

† "All the book," says *Jer. Jones*, "was wrote on one long-continued page, consisting of severalskins fastened together. To the end of the skins was fastened a large staff, or stick, round about which they rolled up the skins; this, when so rolled up, they called *volumen*, à *volvendo*, i. e. a *volume* or *roll*, and the staff about which it was rolled, they called *umbilicus*. And hence we so frequently in the Roman authors meet with *membranæ* for the material on which they wrote, *volumen* for the book itself when wrote, and *ad umbilicum ducere*, to come to the end of the book (*Jansen ad Ps.* xl. 7). So *Martial* in the last *Epigram* of his fourth book, speaking to his book, says,

'Ohe jam satis est, ohe libelle,
Jam pervenimus usque ad *umbilicos*.'

And in another place (L. iii. *Epig.* 2), says of his book,—

'Pictis luxuriis *umbilicos*.'

"That the Jews long before our Saviour's time, did write their books after this manner, there cannot be the least doubt." *Vindication of Matthew*, pp. 154—156. See *Le Clerc* and *Doddridge* on *Luke* iv. 17; *Appendix*, No. VIII.

any part of it, if a different arrangement should have been thought preferable; but the thing is impossible with a modern book.

Though the original copies of the Gospels were not divided into chapters, and numbered as they are now, they were necessarily divided into different parts, probably in the form of paragraphs, as other ancient books often are. And I think it very probable, that different discourses and transactions in the Gospel history were composed at different times by the original writers, and put together afterwards. Indeed, it is hardly possible to write any thing at first exactly as it is intended to go into the world.

Now, by some oversight, perhaps in the first putting together of the Gospel of *John*, or by some very early transcriber having, by mistake, begun to write out the subject of the sixth chapter, and choosing to finish it before he went back to the fifth, or in some other way, against which there might be *à priori* many chances, these two chapters might happen to be transposed; and the copy in which this transposition was made might, on other accounts, have acquired such credit, as to be generally followed afterwards. However, an argument from the state of the text itself is a positive proof of a transposition, whether we can satisfy ourselves about the *manner* in which it might have happened or not. Here I will say with your Lordship, "I attend to the tenour of the Gospel history, and follow wherever it leads." *

Your Lordship thinks, "the fifth chapter of St. John's Gospel—must precede the raising of Jairus's daughter, and the widow of Nain's son, for *vers.* 21, 25, of this chapter contain a prediction that Jesus would shortly raise some from the dead, and thus imply that he had not yet performed a miracle of this kind." † The verses I find as follows: *Ver.* 21: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." *Ver.* 25: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is; when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." Immediately after which follows, *vers.* 26, 27, "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the son of man."

Now I am so far from seeing this passage in the same light in which your Lordship sees it, that I think it much

* *Reply*, p. 114. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 13. (P.)

more natural to suppose that, in the verses I have quoted, our Lord rather alluded to something *already done*, than to something he had never done at all. He seems to be speaking to persons who had heard that he *had* raised some from the dead; and he assures them, that, in like manner as he had raised to life some that had been dead, he would in due time raise *all* the dead, and also judge them according to their works. This I am inclined to think from *the dead* being mentioned in the plural number, and in general, and from the intimation of the future judgment following this resurrection; whereas the persons that he had raised to life on earth were not raised to an immortal life, and therefore their judgment did not immediately follow their resurrection. I do not, however, deny that our Lord might allude to the rising of others from the dead in his life-time, and he might perhaps allude to the case of *Lazarus* and others not mentioned in the Gospels; but what he says by no means implies that he had wrought no miracles of this kind before, and therefore we have here no reason for supposing that the discourse in the fifth chapter preceded the raising of *Jairus's* daughter, or the widow of *Nain's* son.

SECTION VI.

Of Journeys supposed to be omitted in my Harmony.

PROCEEDING with my defence, I find your Lordship charges me with a considerable oversight indeed, nothing less than that of an entire circuit performed by Jesus through *Galilee*, attended by the twelve apostles. "A second circuit," you say, "through Galilee followed, in which the twelve were with Jesus; and of this I think you take no notice, either in your seventeenth Section, or in your Calendar."*

But so far, my Lord, is this from being the case, that I have recited the particulars of this very journey, for which your Lordship finds no particulars at all. For *Luke* himself, after mentioning this journey in general, and those who accompanied our Lord in it, particularly the *twelve*, and certain women who ministered to him of their substance, proceeds, according to the most natural interpretation of his narrative, to recite some of the particulars; and they are the discourse containing the parable of the sower, the

* *Reply*, p. 90. (P.)

cure of the demoniac at *Gadara*, the raising of *Jairus's* daughter, &c., in which, according to the testimony of the other evangelists, he was attended by the twelve apostles. They only refer this part of the Gospel history to an earlier period.

To pretend that the journey was one thing, and the particulars, recited immediately afterwards, another, when the writer himself makes no difference, must be void of all foundation; and to suppose that the parable of the sower was repeated, and that the cure of the demoniac at *Gadara*, &c. happened twice, merely because *Matthew* and *Mark* place them in different parts of their history, (and, indeed, expressly assert that they happened in a different order,) would be to load the history with the greatest improbabilities. For it can never be believed that so many things, attended with so many of the same circumstances, ever happened to any man, as must, upon this plan, be believed of Jesus. If your Lordship's idea of the inspiration of the sacred writers obliges you to maintain this, I am truly sorry for it. You ought, then, to have done as Dr. Maeknight has done, maintain that all the evangelists relate every thing in the order in which they happened, and thereby make the whole history absolutely incredible.

In your margin,* your Lordship likewise refers me to *Matt.* ix. 35, and *Mark* vi. 6, as authorities for the same circuit. But this, my Lord, is evidently a very different journey from that which is mentioned by *Luke*. And yet it is one that I have not overlooked, for it was that in which Jesus visited *Nazareth*.

The case seems to have been thus:—our Lord had, in a former excursion, visited the places in the neighbourhood of *Capernaum*, probably to the north of that city, and among others *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, and he was now about to visit the places to the west. But he had not made much progress before he perceived that, travelling in this manner, he could not do sufficient justice to them all; and therefore he sent the twelve to the more distant places, while he confined himself to *Nazareth* and its neighbourhood. That our readers may judge for themselves how far this account is supported by the evangelists, I shall quote their own words on the occasion.

After the events of the day on which our Lord called *Matthew* to attend him, this evangelist says, (ix. 35—38,

* *Reply*, p. 90.

x. 1, 5,) “Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then says he to his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few: pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits.—These twelve Jesus sent forth.”

According to *Mark*, (vi. 1,) after the events of the same day at *Capernaum*, Jesus “went out from thence, and came into his own country, and his disciples follow him.” He then arrives at *Nazareth*, where, being rejected, (*vers.* 6, 7,) “he went round about the villages teaching. And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.”

There are small variations in these accounts, for which reason your Lordship may be disposed to make another journey out of them, and by this means load and embarrass my system more than you have already done. But I shall not think it at all affected by any thing of this kind.

SECTION VII.

Of the Number of Miles that Jesus has been supposed to travel per Day.

IN order to represent the hurry and fatigue that you suppose I make our Saviour to have been in, on my hypothesis, your Lordship, like Mr. Whiston, draws a plan of all his journeys, from the first passover to the next pentecost, and then computes the number of miles he must have travelled per day. But, my Lord, when any scheme is represented, it should be exhibited *in all its parts*, and not mixed with any other scheme. In this case, therefore, the *time* should not be mine, and the *journeys* your Lordship's. And yet this is the manner in which your Lordship has treated me. This makes a mixture of the two schemes, and something agreeable to neither of them. I am really not a little surprised that the manifest unfairness of this treatment should not have struck your Lordship. Had I

treated your Lordship in the same manner, you would have felt the impropriety of it in a moment.

That we may examine this business with more attention, I must beg your Lordship to turn to p. 93 of your Letter, and we will look over the list that your Lordship has there drawn of our Saviour's journeys, and I will point out what articles I admit, and what I object to. I will then allow the rest in your own numbers, that you may not think that I will contend for trifles, and we shall see how the account of his daily progress really stands upon my *hypothesis*, un-mixed with your Lordship's.

No.	Miles.
1. " From Jerusalem to Judea	25." Granted.
2. " From Judea to Cana . . .	50." Granted.
3. " From Cana through Na- } zareth to Capernaum }	30." Granted in part only.*
4. " The circuit about Galilee	70." Granted in part.†
5. " From Capernaum to Je- } rusalem }	65." Not granted.‡
6. " From Capernaum to Nain	20." Granted.
7. " To Chorazin and Bethsaida	5." Not granted.§
8. " The second circuit about } Galilee }	70." Not granted.
9. " Crossing the lake in a } ship to Gadara, and } back to Capernaum }	12." Granted.
10. " To Nazareth	20." Granted.
11. " Teaching and preaching } in the cities of Galilee }	33." Granted in part.¶

If your Lordship will now please to cast up the number of miles as I have corrected them, you will find the whole amount to be 197, instead of 400, that is, not quite half as much travelling. And dividing this number by 50, you

* Because I do not suppose Jesus to have passed through Nazareth; and for this, according to your Lordship's map, I ought to deduct more than I do, when I allow 20 miles. (P.)

† I deduct from this article at least two-thirds, because I confine the circuit to the places in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, chiefly to the north of that town. I, therefore, call it 30 miles. (P.)

‡ With this journey I have nothing at all to do, and I wonder your Lordship should not have put to my account the journey back again as well as the journey thither, as one of them could not have been made without the other. (P.)

§ This I do not admit, because I suppose the visit to those places to be included in No. 4. (P.)

|| See the reasons in the last Section. (P.)

¶ This journey I confine to the neighbourhood of Nazareth, and therefore shall not allow much more than half the number of miles, or 20. (P.)

will find that there is no occasion, on my *hypothesis*, to suppose our Lord to have travelled quite four miles per day; and where is the great improbability in this? Few men of an active life, I believe, walk less, and many persons walk three or four times as much, the whole year through.

It is, besides, by no means certain, though it seems to be generally taken for granted, that our Saviour always travelled on foot. *Luke* (viii. 2, 3) informs us, that in one of his progresses through *Galilee*, (and it was, probably, the same in most of the others,) he was attended by “Mary called Magdalene,—and many others, *who* ministered unto him of their substance.” Now these women cannot be supposed to have travelled on foot, and would they suffer the person on whom they attended, and whose expenses they defrayed, to do so, at least always; though this might be the case in little excursions from any more considerable place, to the neighbouring villages, where the women might not always attend him?

This, I own, is conjecture. But if our Lord was attended by *rich women* at all, I cannot think the supposition, of his not travelling always on foot, to be wholly without probability. The twelve apostles also do not, by any means, appear to have been poor, or unable to provide mules for themselves. *Peter, Andrew, James, John* and *Matthew*, it is pretty certain, had some property, and none of the apostles were in the capacity of servants, or in the lowest classes of life.

SECTION VIII.

Of References to more than Two Passovers in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

I MUST now attend to another of your Lordship’s arguments for extending the time of our Lord’s ministry beyond the year and a few months that Mr. Mann assigns to it. It is the indication of *other passovers* intervening between the two that are allowed to be expressly mentioned by *John*. Every additional passover undoubtedly adds a year to the duration of our Lord’s ministry, but your Lordship must allow me to require sufficient evidence for such passovers.

You say, that “the three first evangelists—omit the first passover, and other intermediate events. But they all imply

a passover after the imprisonment of John, when they mention the plucking and eating of ears of corn.”*

But this event I place before the *pentecost* after the first *passover*, the most proper time of the year for that transaction. It is only the long stay that your Lordship makes in Judea that obliges you to defer it till after another passover.

“St. Luke,” you say, “refers to some national festival between the second and third passover,”† when he says, (xiii. 1,) “There were present—some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.” But it is by no means certain that this event happened during the course of our Lord’s ministry. It might not be at a public festival, or that festival might not be a passover.

“There is also,” your Lordship says, “another implication of the paschal season when St. Mark says, (vi. 39,) that the five thousand, when they were miraculously fed by Jesus, sat down on the *green grass*.”‡ This I think I have sufficiently accounted for before.

“St. Luke,” your Lordship says, “alludes to one or two of our Lord’s journeys to Jerusalem besides his last. *Chap. x. 38* :”§ “Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village, and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house.” And also xvii. 11 : “And it came to pass as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.” With respect to these journeys, I can only say that they appear to me to be the same, viz. that which preceded the last passover, though there is, evidently, a good deal of confusion in this part of *Luke’s* history. The former is not said to be any journey to Jerusalem at all, or it might be at some other public feast, and not a passover.

St. Luke, your Lordship says, “records a reference to his preaching in Judea and Jerusalem, *chap. xxiii. 5* :”|| “And they were the more fierce, saying, he stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee, to this place.” Now it is not denied, but supposed by me, that all the latter part of our Lord’s ministry was employed in *Judea*, after he had spent the first part of it in *Galilee*.

You say, that both “St. Luke and St. Matthew suppose

* *Reply*, p. 139. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* pp. 139, 140. (P.)

† *Ibid.* (P.)

|| *Ibid.* p. 140. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* (P.)

our Lord to have been often at Jerusalem,"* referring to *Luke* xiii. 34, and *Matt.* xxiii. 37. The passage from *Luke* is, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" The passage from *Matthew* is to the same purpose, and almost in the same words. To this I think it sufficient to reply, that, in my opinion, the preaching of Jesus in *Jerusalem*, at four public feasts, and in *Judea*, all the last half year of his ministry, abundantly justifies the language.

"The astonishment and fear of the twelve, described by Mark, (x. 32,)" your Lordship says, "imply that Jesus had before incurred danger at Jerusalem."† The passage is, "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them, and they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid."

Now this *amazement* seems to me to have been occasioned by the idea of the difficulty our Lord had just before expressed, of rich men getting into the kingdom of heaven, when to be rich and great was their original view in following Jesus. And their *fear* might have been occasioned by the intimation our Lord had just given them of the persecutions they were to expect in his service. Nothing is there said of any danger to Jesus himself in particular. However, it is well known that Jesus had been in danger at *Jerusalem*, and his disciples expressly referred to it, when they would have dissuaded him from going to see *Lazarus*.

In the last place, your Lordship says, that "our Lord's words, *from the days of John the Baptist until now*, *Matt.* xi. 12, are better suited to the opinion, that the Baptist's imprisonment had taken place eight or ten months before, than about four weeks."‡

I answer, that they would have suited better still if the interval had been eight or ten years; but better, as I suppose it, to have been four weeks, than four days. But, my Lord, "from the days of John the Baptist," certainly means the *beginning* of his preaching, which I suppose to have been seven or eight months before this discourse of our Lord's.

After reciting these and other arguments, by your Lordship's own confession still weaker than these, and on which,

* *Reply*, p. 140. (P.)

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* (P.)

therefore, I do not animadvert, you very properly add, "Still I believe that the sagacity of critics would have been fruitlessly employed about these hints, but for John's supplemental history."* Much, indeed, my Lord, are the favourers of your Lordship's hypothesis indebted to that one word *πασχα*, in the sixth chapter of that Gospel. It is the corner-stone of the whole system. But it seems now to be so much loosened by the repeated pushing of several able critics, that I cannot help thinking it will soon be forced out of the place it has so long occupied; when all that has been so long and so laboriously built upon it will fall to the ground.

There are arguments of a different complexion derived from the Gospel history, favourable, as your Lordship thinks, to the supposition of our Lord's ministry having continued more than a year and a few months; but I think I need not reply to them, as you say, "My reason for mentioning these passages is, that I might somewhere take notice of all the marks of time respecting the length of our Lord's ministry, or supposed to respect it."† I shall, however, just repeat them after your Lordship, that they may have an opportunity of making what impression they can upon our readers. They are the following: "The parable of the fig-tree, (*Luke* xiii. 6—9,) which had been barren for three years;" our Lord's saying, "I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected;" (*Luke* xiii. 32;) *Herod* having "desired to see Jesus (*Luke* xxiii. 8) of a long season;" "our Lord's words to Philip, (*John* xiv. 9,) Have I been so long time with you?" and, lastly, his saying to his disciples, (*Matt.* xv. 16,) "Are ye also yet without understanding?"‡ I can freely say of such arguments as these, *Valeant, quantum valere possunt*.

SECTION IX.

Of the Argument for the probable Duration of our Saviour's Ministry from the Objects of it.

THIS topic, my Lord, is, in its own nature, a very vague one; for, leaving *facts*, we are too much at liberty to *conjecture* what we please, and therefore judge variously. On this account I had intended not to have troubled your

* *Reply*, p. 144. (P.)

† *Ibid.* pp. 143, 144. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 141, 142. (P.)

Lordship, or our readers, with any thing farther on this subject, but to leave what we have both advanced to make what impression it will. But there are some observations of your Lordship on this subject, in reply to others of mine, that I think you will expect that I should take some notice of.

I shall first make one general remark, which is, that your Lordship and myself, biassed, perhaps, by our different hypotheses, are apt to attend to different things, your Lordship more especially to what you suppose our Lord had *to do*, and I to what he actually *did*. Your Lordship, for instance, considers the business of instructing the twelve apostles as requiring a long space of time ;* whereas I attend more to what they actually learned ; and finding it to be very little, suppose it to have required but little time. And your Lordship must acknowledge that their full instructions were not given before the descent of the Spirit, after our Lord's ascension. After his death and resurrection, they were as full as ever of their ideas of a temporal kingdom. They had acquired, indeed, a rooted affection and veneration for him, on account of the perfect innocence and great excellence of his character, a conviction that he was a teacher sent from God, and the *Messiah*, and consequently a thorough persuasion that he was incapable of deceiving them. But surely a year's intimacy was sufficient for these purposes.

Your Lordship speaks of " a long series of prophecies having preceded our Lord's coming, and that every former dispensation had a manifest subserviency to his."† But I consider the Gospel dispensation as only *opened* by Christ himself, and, therefore, that those prophecies equally respect all that was done by the apostles, and indeed what is doing to this day.

Your Lordship says, that on my hypothesis " it might have been objected in all ages, that our Lord's miracles and doctrines had not been subjected to due scrutiny."‡ I answer, that this might have had some weight if no more miracles had been wrought in defence of Christianity, besides those that were wrought by Christ himself ; but it has no weight at all when it is considered, that the power of working miracles did not cease with our Lord, but continued in equal if not greater vigour with the apostles, and others to whom they communicated spiritual gifts. Our

* *Reply*, p. 170. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 169. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 172. (P.)

Saviour himself says, (*John* xiv. 12,) that they should do *greater works than he had done*. Accordingly, our Saviour's miracles did not exceed those of the apostles in magnitude, and they certainly fell far short of them in number; and the latter continued through the whole apostolical age; so that all the effect that the best-attested miracles could have, was produced.

On one occasion your Lordship seems to write as if you thought that even fewer miracles than our Saviour himself wrought might have been sufficient. For, after reciting the particulars of what you suppose him to have done in one year only, and that into which you throw the least business, you say, "This is the substance of all that is recorded between the first and second passover; and I think it amounts to a very full promulgation of the Gospel, and affords a very satisfactory proof of its divine origin."*

As it has a near connexion with this subject, I shall here introduce what your Lordship says of the time that our Lord must have spent at *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, in order to justify the vehemence of his denunciations against those cities. "From our Lord's mention of *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, as the scene of most of his mighty works, and of such as would have convinced Tyre and Sidon, I conclude that they had repeated, as well as ample means of conviction.

"There is only one miracle recorded as wrought near *Bethsaida*, and whoever has attended to our Lord's manner will discover traces in this relation, that the inhabitants of that place were deemed by him unworthy of his farther interposition to convert them.

"I think that Jesus often visited these places from *Capernaum*, and that he both taught in their synagogues, and wrought miracles in their streets. Cities twice mentioned with *Capernaum* seem to have enjoyed like means of reformation with that favoured city; and the adopters of an hypothesis shew themselves embarrassed, who must almost necessarily recur to a single miracle publicly performed, or to as much as was transacted at *Capernaum* in the evening of a single day, as sufficient grounds for such awful declarations concerning the impenitence and punishment of these cities."†

Now, my Lord, if I may be allowed to judge for myself, I feel no embarrassment at all in this case. On the con-

* *Reply*, p. 166. (P.)

† *Ibid*, p. 94. (P.)

trary, I think your Lordship will find yourself not a little embarrassed in shewing that even *Capernaum* itself, that *favoured city*, as you call it, enjoyed any more advantage than I suppose our Lord had, at least time enough, upon my plan, to allow both to *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*. For all that we know of his performing there, was the cure of the *demoniac* in the synagogue, with the other transactions of that particular sabbath; his healing the centurion's servant on his return from his first excursion, the cure of the paralytic person, and the raising of *Jairus's* daughter, with the other events of the day on which he called *Matthew*, and the discourse in the synagogue, related in the 6th chapter of *John*.

Your Lordship may *suppose* much more than this to have been done, but this is all that is *related*; and, for my own part, I see no reason for supposing any more. Your Lordship may speak as slightly as you please of "a single miracle publicly performed;" but certainly, if the circumstances were such as to leave no doubt but that it was a *real miracle*, it must have been sufficient to have answered all the proper purposes of miracles; and any thing farther, of that kind, must have been superfluous. What could it have signified to work repeated miracles before those that ascribed all our Lord's miracles to the power of Beelzebub?

As to *moral instructions*, the delivering of them cannot be said to have been our Lord's particular business. He certainly neglected no proper opportunity of giving useful lessons to the people, and especially of correcting the abuses which the Scribes and Pharisees had introduced into the interpretation of the law. But it ought not to be forgotten by us, that our Lord's proper business (if we may be allowed to form a judgment concerning it from the tenor of the Gospel history) was to exhibit sufficient proofs that he was a teacher sent from God, and the promised *Messiah*, and especially by his resurrection from the dead.

Every thing else, such as the practical use of this, was the business of the ordinary preachers of the Gospel. And if we suppose our Lord's proper business, that is, such as no other person could with propriety do, to have been any thing more than this, (for which one year was abundantly sufficient,) three years, or thirty years, would not have sufficed. Nay, he must have preached in person to the end of the world.

SECTION X.

Of the Transactions at the first Passover.

HAVING considered every thing of a more general nature relating to the duration of our Lord's ministry, I am now ready to attend to what your Lordship has observed relating to some more particular incidents in our Saviour's history; especially what you suppose to have passed at *Jerusalem* during the first passover, in Judea afterwards, and then in *Galilee*.

Your Lordship objects to my supposing that our Lord did not stay at Jerusalem during the whole eight days of the feast of passover; * observing very justly from *Grotius*, that it was usual with devout Jews to continue there during the whole of the feast. This, however, your Lordship, who supposes our Saviour to have been absent from Jerusalem many entire feasts, cannot say was absolutely necessary; the evangelist does not say that he attended the whole feast, and the same writer expressly says, that he did not go up to another of the feasts, till the middle of it.

But your Lordship *asserts*, that at this particular time Jesus did not leave Jerusalem before the expiration of the eight days of the feast. "My reasons," your Lordship says, "for this assertion are, because our Lord wrought miracles during the feast, because he did not then trust himself to the many who believed in him, and because at that time a Jewish ruler visited him by night, and referred to his miracles, as sufficient to prove him a teacher sent from God." †

But, as your Lordship acknowledges, part of this business, viz. the preaching, working miracles, and consequently gaining disciples, might have been done *before the feast*, and a very short time will suffice for the rest. I am sensible, however, that the antecedent probability is, that, like other pious Jews, he would continue at Jerusalem the whole eight days of the feast. But since, as your Lordship acknowledges, this was not absolutely necessary, where can be the great improbability of his leaving Jerusalem about the middle of this first feast, when he might have found himself exposed to so much notice from the miracles he had wrought, as might be inconvenient to him, especially at the opening of his ministry?

* *Reply*, p. 19. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 17. (P.)

“Another probable argument,” your Lordship says, “for the continuance of Jesus at Jerusalem all the time of the passover, is this, that it seems suitable to his wisdom and goodness, as a heavenly messenger.”* But, then, why did he not attend all the feasts, and every day belonging to them? Your Lordship, however, refers to the propriety of his intimating his commission at this first passover. “At this feast,” you say, “our Lord gave a plain intimation of his Messiahship, by calling the temple his Father’s house.”† You add, “The bolder his action of purging the temple was, the greater is the praise of his *fortitude*.” But then, the less must have been his *prudence*, which, according to the whole tenor of his conduct, was equally distinguished, especially at the opening of his ministry.

It is, I think, extremely improbable that our Lord should choose to give any such plain intimation of his being the *Messiah* so early; though he did there things from which, assisted by the testimony of John, they might have *inferred* that he must be the *Messiah*. It is said, indeed, (*John* ii. 23,) that “many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.” But it is not said that they believed him to be the *Messiah*, but only, in general, “a teacher come from God.” This is all that *Nicodemus* intimates; *John* iii. 2: “We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” And what our Lord says of his pretensions, to this Jewish ruler, is very obscure and reserved.

We deceive ourselves, and are apt to be misled in the interpretation of the Gospel history, by not sufficiently considering what kind of a *Messiah* the Jews expected. Now our Saviour, notwithstanding his working miracles, was a person so exceedingly unlike him that they expected, that it was not at all probable that they would soon suppose him to be the *Messiah*. It does not appear that even *John the Baptist* ever expressly called him the *Messiah*. He only spoke of him (*Luke* iii. 17) as one greatly his superior, and who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Our Lord himself appears to have been remarkably cautious on this subject. Indeed, there is no evidence of his giving any *plain intimation* that he was the *Messiah*, till much later in his ministry; and the first open declaration he made of it was to the apostles only, accompanied with an

* *Reply*, p. 9. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 19. (P.)

express charge, (*Matt.* xii. 16 ; *Mark* iii. 12,) “ that they should not make him known.” It is indeed remarkable that he expressly told “ the woman of Samaria,” (*John* iv. 26,) that he was the *Messiah*, and consequently, we may suppose all the people of *Sychar*. But from a town in *Samaria* it was not likely to spread and gain much credit among the *Jews*.

Is this conduct, my Lord, consistent with his having given a *plain intimation* of his *Messiahship*, to all the *Jews* so early, and so openly as at the first *passover*, or, as your Lordship expresses it,* with his having publicly declared his office at the first *passover*?

Your Lordship, in giving reasons why you suppose our Lord wrought no miracles in *Judea*, (though I can see no reason why he should not, after having wrought many in *Jerusalem* immediately before,) in order to account for the three first evangelists not noticing this period of our Lord’s preaching, says, that “ though the *Jews* had no prejudices about the forerunner of their *Messiah* ; the true *Messiah*, of humble birth and station, the erector of a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men, could not have run his destined course without the highest degree of prudence.” †

Now, my Lord, I do not see the perfect consistency of his publicly declaring himself to be the *Messiah* at the *passover*, which must have been the extreme of *boldness*, (I should think of indiscretion,) and his passing immediately after to such an extreme of *caution*, as to preach during his long stay in *Judea* without working any miracles ; a thing very unusual, to say the least, with our Lord, whenever an opportunity offered. Indeed, my Lord, the methods you take to make this long stay and preaching of Jesus in *Judea* pass unnoticed by the three first evangelists, is not, I think, sufficiently consistent with what you suppose to have been transacted at the *passover* immediately preceding ; and it satisfies me that his preaching in *Judea* could not have taken so much time as your Lordship imagines.

Your Lordship conjectures, that “ the miracles wrought at *Jerusalem* during the first *passover* were of that most benevolent, conciliating kind, which consisted in removing human sicknesses and infirmities,” ‡ which I think very probable. But were not these of a very different nature from his violent cleansing of the temple ? How is this consistent with what your Lordship says, of “ his not choosing, during his conti-

* *Reply*, p. 45. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 49. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 17. (P.)

nuance in Judea, to attract general notice, and to gather multitudes about him?" * The buying and selling in the outer court of the temple, for the convenience of those who came to sacrifice, was probably an immemorial custom, and had the sanction of the Scribes and Pharisees; and therefore could not have been interrupted in so violent a manner as that in which our Saviour did it, with *a whip*, and *overturning of the tables and seats*, &c. without setting all the then subsisting authority at defiance. Mr. Mann therefore thinks, that this cleansing of the temple (which none of the evangelists says was done more than once) was done by our Lord only at the last passover, immediately after his entering the city in triumph, and with such a popularity as no power of the Jewish rulers could oppose. †

Your Lordship insists upon it, that this remarkable action was performed at the first passover, as well as at the last; and you think, that you can observe some difference between the first cleansing mentioned by John, and the second, of which there is an account in the other evangelists; because on the former occasion the Jews only say, "What sign shewest thou, seeing thou doest these things?" and on the latter occasion, "they sought how they might destroy him." ‡

Now, considering that our Lord, at the time that I lay the scene for this transaction, entered Jerusalem with a crowd of attendants, singing, (*Mark xi. 9.*) "Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," (that is, the *Messiah*,) it may easily be conceived that the Pharisees and high-priests durst not openly oppose him; so that, though they considered him as assuming a high tone of authority, they did not venture, at that time, any farther than to ask him [*ver. 28*] by what authority he acted. But how is this inconsistent with their privately resolving, from that moment, to cut him off? In all other respects, the transaction, as described by all the evangelists, is the very same; and I cannot help thinking the scene of it to be, on many accounts, more properly laid at the last, than at the first passover.

Besides, if our Lord had acted with this authority at the first passover, he would have been under a kind of necessity of enforcing his orders every time that he had gone to Jeru-

* *Reply*, p. 40. (P.)

† "It was a high, authoritative act of prophetic zeal, exercised upon a multitude of knaves, like which nothing had been seen in the second temple." *Mann*, p. 180. See *Appendix*, No. VII.

‡ *Reply*, p. 24. (P.)

salem ; and if it had been repeated with proper effect, as we may be well assured it would have been, if it had been done by our Lord at all, the custom would have been discontinued, and it would not have been to do again at the last passover. At least, if the Jews had ventured to resume the custom, we might expect some reference to former injunctions, and to a similar conduct of his own, the next time that our Lord acted the same part over again. But all the evangelists relate the transaction without giving the least intimation that it had ever been done before.

Some commentators have given so little attention to the nature of this remarkable transaction, as to imagine that our Lord performed it both on the evening of the day in which he entered Jerusalem in triumph, and again the next morning ; because *Matthew* says it happened on one of the days, and *Mark* on the other. But is it not more probable that one of these historians, and especially *Mark*, might be mistaken with respect to the particular day, than that the same persons who quietly submitted to a violent expulsion in the evening, should have so far recovered themselves as to have replaced their seats, &c. and have resumed their business early the next morning, the populace at the same time favouring our Lord and his authority ?

SECTION XI.

Of the Stay that Jesus made in Judea after the first Passover.

ON the subject of this Section I do not intend to trouble your Lordship long. You do not pretend that my distribution of the events relating to our Saviour's tarrying in Judea before his journey to Galilee is *physically impossible*, * and the *probability* of it must be determined by an attention to all the circumstances.

The circumstance on which I laid the principal stress, in urging the shortness of that stay, was the total silence of the three first evangelists respecting it, and their uniformly representing the preaching of the Gospel as having *begun in Galilee*, and afterwards to have extended to Judea. I therefore said, "the thing was not so considerable as to have been even noticed by any other evangelist than John, though it was prior to any thing that they (the other evangelists) have related of the ministry of Jesus, when it was least likely

to have escaped their notice, if it had been at all considerable." *

Remarking on this passage, your Lordship says, "Apply this mode of arguing to the earliest testimonies which the Baptist gave Jesus, to the miracle at Cana, and particularly to Jesus's attendance and miracles at the first passover, and then judge of its conclusiveness." †

I answer, that I am very willing to apply this mode of reasoning as your Lordship directs, and to the same particulars. The earliest testimonies which the *Baptist* gave to Jesus are recorded by *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*. What your Lordship here refers to in the margin, viz. *John* i. 26—28, I find in your Lordship's *own Harmony* placed after them, just as they are in my *Harmony*. I therefore do not see the propriety of the instance, at all. It is no case of any thing considerable omitted by the three first evangelists, before their account of our Saviour's preaching in *Galilee*.

The miracle at *Cana*, of turning water into wine, besides being of a private nature, known only at first to the servants of a single family, does not appear to have been accompanied with any preaching; so that the use of it, as a confirmation of our Lord's mission, was not very apparent. And as to the miracles performed at Jerusalem, till we know what they were, it is impossible to know whether they were considerable or not, or whether they were accompanied with preaching.

The preaching in *Judea*, subsequent to this, your Lordship supposes not to have been accompanied with miracles; and by this you seem to allow all that I contend for, viz. that our Lord did nothing so considerable there as to be heard of at a distance, in *Galilee* for instance, where the apostles then resided, in their several private capacities; so that, to every great purpose, and even according to your own account, our Lord may, with propriety enough, be said to have *opened his commission in form*, that is, attended with its proper testimonials and evidence, in *Galilee*, where *Matthew* says, (iv. 17,) that he "began to preach," and where the Gospel is always said to have *originated*.

I had observed, that the great fame of Jesus in *Galilee* seems to have been occasioned by the miracles he wrought after his appearance in that country. And if, as your Lordship says, "it be doubtful whether our Lord wrought any miracles during this stay of his in *Judea*," ‡ nothing that he

* *Supra*, p. 125.

† *Reply* p. 41. (P.)

‡ *Reply*, p. 39. (P.)

did there could have greatly contributed to it. The people of *Galilee* are represented, (*John* iv. 45,) as “having seen” what Jesus had done “at the feast” only, and not any thing subsequent to it.

The expression your Lordship quotes from *Luke* iv. 14, as a proof that his great fame in *Galilee* was occasioned by what he did in *Judea*, appears to me easily to admit of a contrary interpretation, and to refer to the fame he acquired *after* his arrival there. The words of this evangelist are as follows: “And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into *Galilee*: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about; and he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.” Here his great fame is evidently subsequent to the mention of his arrival in *Galilee*, and therefore was probably occasioned by something done by him *in Galilee*, particularly by his preaching in their synagogues; which was the scene of his first cure of a *demoniac*, and was at *Capernaum*.

There is another argument against this long stay of our Lord in *Judea*, which, though I do not think decisive, I think deserving of your Lordship’s consideration.

Jesus says to the apostles, (*John* xv. 27,) “And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning;” the most natural interpretation of which is, that they had attended him, not perhaps as *apostles*, but as *disciples*, from the commencement of his public ministry, and that they had continued with him ever since. This is perfectly agreeable to my idea of our Lord’s not having properly begun to preach till he came to *Capernaum*, from which time it is probable enough that all the twelve, except perhaps *Matthew*, attended him constantly, and probably *Matthew* himself occasionally, (as he lived at *Capernaum*, especially when he delivered the Sermon on the Mount, of which he gives so large a detail,) though they were not separated from the rest of the disciples till some time afterwards; whereas your Lordship makes our Saviour to have preached publicly some months in *Judea*, also in a leisurely journey through *Samaria*, and at *Cana*, and to have preached and been rejected at *Nazareth* before he reached *Capernaum*, that is, before the call of *Peter* and *Andrew*, *James* and *John* to a constant attendance upon him. And according to the plan of your Lordship’s Harmony, the apostles were not separated from the rest of the disciples till more than a whole year after the commencement of his ministry. The wisdom of this conduct is certainly not very apparent.

SECTION XII.

Of the Journey from Judea to Galilee.

ON this subject your Lordship's disposition to *extend*, and mine to *shorten*, are sufficiently apparent. The whole journey was about *three* days according to our Lord's own way of travelling, and I give *six* days to it, allowing for a stay of part of two days at *Sychar*, and other unknown interruptions. Whether there be any thing in this to clog my scheme, I leave to the impartial to judge. Your Lordship, however, as usual, disputes every inch of this ground with me, and first with respect to the distance being a journey of three days.

"When you assert that the whole journey," your Lordship says, "from Jerusalem to Galilee was but of three days, according to our Lord's own mode of travelling, I suppose that you have in view *John* ii. 1. But here it is probable that Jesus set out from Bethabara, and not from Jerusalem, which affects the distance to Cana one half; and the words may mean on the third day after Jesus's arrival, or on the third day of the marriage-feast." *

Now when I supposed † that Jesus might take three days to travel from *Judea* to *Galilee*, I alluded not to *John* ii. 1, but to *Luke* xiii. 33, where we find that Jesus, being in Galilee, says he must travel three days before he can reach Jerusalem, or rather that he could not reach Jerusalem till the third day from the time that he was speaking; "I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

With respect to the passage in *John*, your Lordship says, that "Jesus probably set out from Bethabara," ‡ which might be the case. But in the latter case he was actually in *Galilee*, though it is not said where; so that the distance must be reckoned from thence to Jerusalem. Nor, my Lord, is the distance so great, but that persons used to walking might very well perform the journey in the time our Saviour mentions. For from *Jerusalem* to *Capernaum*, situated at the northermost part of the sea of Galilee, does not seem to have been more than sixty or seventy miles, that is, little more than twenty miles per day.

Your Lordship says, "this journey from Judea to

* *Reply*, p. 60. (P.)

† *Supra*, p. 129.

‡ *Reply*, p. 60. (P.)

Galilee was about equal to that from the neighbourhood of Capernaum to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, for which I allow a fortnight or three weeks, and less than that from the neighbourhood of Bethsaida to the town of Cæsarea Philippi, for which I allow a fortnight.” *

But, my Lord, I did not suppose that the three weeks, or the fortnight, in these cases, were wholly spent in *travelling* only ; for then it would have been a sauntering business indeed ; but in preaching, in a country which Jesus had never visited before, and did not intend to visit again ; and for this purpose he probably made many deviations from the direct road. Whereas in his journey from *Judea* to *Galilee*, it does not appear that he stopped at any place besides *Sychar*, and, as I observed, he might set out from *Bethabara*, which, as your Lordship observes, is about half-way to *Galilee*. For, after leaving Jerusalem to go probably to the neighbourhood of Jordan, he would naturally recede farther and farther from the capital ; so that his journey to *Sychar* might not be more than half a day, arriving there, as he probably did, the first day about noon.

To enlarge our Saviour’s business on this journey, your Lordship speaks of his “teaching and converting the Samaritans during two days, and of his preaching the gospel of the kingdom as he journeyed.” † But, my Lord, nothing of this is related in the history. Our Lord does not appear to have had the least intercourse with any *Samaritans*, except those of *Sychar* ; and nothing is said of his preaching to Jews till he came to *Capernaum*, according to my plan of the events, or to *Nazareth*, according to your Lordship’s.

Mark i. 14, to which your Lordship refers, only says that “Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.” But this expression would be justifiable, though he did not stop to preach as he travelled, at all, but only on his arrival in *Galilee* ; and this I really think was the meaning of the evangelist.

Our Lord, indeed, cured a nobleman’s son of *Capernaum*, while he was at *Cana* ; but nothing is said of his *preaching* there, any more than when he turned the water into wine, at the same place. I do not say that he did not preach, but that nothing is *said* of his preaching ; and he might choose to work that miracle, in order to raise the expectation of the people of that country concerning him, without giving them any farther satisfaction. And till long after this time, our

* *Reply*, p. 60. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 62. (P.)

Lord's preaching seems only to have been similar to that of *John*, the purport of which was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The generality of his discourses, as they were only occasional, seem not to have been of great length.

Your Lordship speaks of some stay that our Lord made at *Cana*, and you suppose it to have been *four days*;* but nothing is said by the evangelist of *any* stay, or of any preaching that would require a stay. I therefore conclude that, excepting his stay at *Sychar*, which there is no reason to suppose was more than one whole day, our Lord kept travelling on till he arrived at *Capernaum*.

As to the time of our Lord's stay at *Sychar*, I said, † that, though it is called *two days*, it might not, according to the Jewish phraseology, mean more than *part of two days*, so that he might leave the place *on the second day*. This you do not deny; but you say, that "it appears from Matt. xvii. 1, compared with Luke ix. 28, that the words may also signify two complete days."

What these two historians speak of, is the interval between the time of a particular discourse of our Lord's, and his transfiguration; which *Luke* says was "about eight days after," and *Matthew* "after six days." But in this your Lordship supposes what I do not, viz. that these two writers were equally well informed with respect to that interval, and had the same idea of it; whereas it appears to me that *Luke*, who was not present, was not quite certain about it, and therefore he says it was "about eight days after;" but *Matthew*, who was present, says positively, that it was "after six days," or, as I interpret it, *on the sixth day* from the time of the discourse.

SECTION XIII.

Whether Jesus visited Capernaum or Nazareth first.

YOUR Lordship says that I "contend for it, that the visit to Nazareth *followed* that to Cana,"‡ meaning that it preceded the visit to *Capernaum*; and, in reply to what I had advanced on the subject, § you say, "St. Luke directly asserts this fact; and I believe him."||

But, my Lord, *Matthew* is just as express in asserting the contrary. He says, (iv. 17,) that after his arrival at *Caper-*

* *Reply*, p. 63. (P.)

† *Supra*, p. 129.

‡ *Reply*, p. 73. (P.)

§ *Supra*, p. 130.

|| *Reply*, p. 76. (P.)

naum, "Jesus began to preach;" and he does not speak of his rejection at *Nazareth* till long after, viz. xiii. 57. And that this was the same rejection with that of which *Luke* speaks, [iv. 24,] is as evident as a thing of this nature can well be; because they are attended with several of the same circumstances. In both, the people are offended at the meanness of his parentage, and in both he replies that a prophet is not esteemed "in his own country." *Matthew* says expressly, [xiii. 58,] that "he did not many mighty works there," and *Luke* does not mention any.

Mark (vi. 1) is as express in placing the visit to *Nazareth*, and his rejection there, attended also with the same remarkable circumstances, long after his preaching at *Capernaum*. Now as all these evangelists are equally express, is not the testimony of two preferable to that of one, and that one the least likely to be exactly informed of the fact?

As to the two visits to *Nazareth*, which your Lordship supposes, and two rejections there, I must say that I see no evidence whatever for it. For it can never be probable that two visits to the same place should have been attended with the same circumstances. Even *Epiphanius*, who makes so many visits to *Nazareth*, supposes only one rejection there.

All the difference your Lordship pretends to find between the two supposed journeys, is, that "on the *first* visit," mentioned by *Luke*, you say "it seems probable that Jesus wrought no miracle;"* whereas on the second, mentioned by *Matthew* [xiii. 58] and *Mark* [vi. 5] "he did not many mighty works there," *only laying his hands on a few sick persons, and healing them*. But, my Lord, *Luke* does not say expressly, that he wrought no miracle at all. You can only infer from his account, that he did nothing so extraordinary as he had done at *Capernaum*, which is not inconsistent with his curing a few sick persons, which *Mark* evidently speaks of as a thing that was inconsiderable.

If, my Lord, a variation so very trifling as this will authorize us to suppose a repetition of any transaction in the Gospel history, I will venture to say, there is no incident in the whole compass of it that must not be doubled, if it has been related by two evangelists, and trippled if related by three. No history can bear to be treated in this manner, and retain its credibility. It has been in this way, viz. by contending for the most minute agreement in the different accounts of

the same thing, that much injury has been done to the evidence of Christianity already.

I am, if possible, still less satisfied with your Lordship's reply to my principal argument for the visit to *Capernaum* preceding that to *Nazareth*, viz. from the reference to miracles performed at Capernaum while our Lord was at Nazareth, in *Luke* iv. 23 : "Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum do also here in thy country," which I think clearly implies, that he had wrought many extraordinary miracles there.

To this your Lordship says, "This is a difficulty which well deserves our attention, as Christian critics. I have thus, (Notes on my Harmony,) endeavoured to obviate it: 'Ὅσα may solely refer to the miracle recorded John iv. 46—54, the scene of which was Capernaum: as Ὅσα, *Luke* viii. 39, refers only to a single transaction.' I add, and as τῶν, John v. 20, refers only to the healing of the man who had been infirm for thirty-eight years."*

How this solution of the difficulty may strike other persons I cannot tell. To me it seems very unnatural. A single miracle, the scene of which was at *Capernaum*, when Jesus himself had not been there, applies but very imperfectly, to say the best, to things that he had done in Capernaum. In these circumstances, I should rather expect that the reference would have been to the things he had done in *Jerusalem*, or *Judea*.

Besides, *Luke* does not assert it as a point of chronology, of which he had taken pains to be particularly well informed, that the visit to *Nazareth* preceded that to *Capernaum*. He only says, [iv. 30, 31,] that "he, passing through the midst of them," (the people of *Nazareth*,) "went his way, and came down to Capernaum." And *Matthew* and *Mark*, as I observed before, are equally express in noting a great number of events, which they relate as taking place between the visit to *Capernaum* and that to *Nazareth*; so that all the difference is, that *Matthew* and *Mark* make it to be much longer after our Lord departed from Capernaum and went to Nazareth, than *Luke* does from his leaving Nazareth to go to Capernaum.

With respect to the *time of the day* when our Lord entered Capernaum, on which your Lordship makes an observation, † I am ready to acknowledge, that from *Luke's* account [v. 5] only, it would be most natural to conclude that Jesus met *Peter* and *Andrew* in the morning, immediately after they had "toiled all night." I doubt not *Luke* himself

* *Reply*, pp. 76. 77. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 82. (P.)

thought so. But his account of this transaction is so different from that of the other evangelists, that many commentators have thought them to be quite distinct from one another, and to relate to incidents that happened at different times. I think it most probable that *Luke* was not so well informed of some of the circumstances of this transaction.

SECTION XIV.

Of the Harmony of the Gospels according to the Ancients, especially Eusebius and Epiphanius, and some of the Moderns who have most nearly followed them.

IT would, I doubt not, be a great satisfaction to your Lordship, as well as to myself, to trace the whole progress of harmonizing the Gospels from the earliest times. But this, I apprehend, it will not be possible for us to do completely. It may be of some use, however, to collect a few hints to this purpose, from the works of such of the early fathers as have bestowed the most pains upon the subject, as *Eusebius* and *Epiphanius*. As for the Harmonies of *Ammonius* and *Tatian*, it is very doubtful whether the works which go under their names be theirs, and if they be, it is generally acknowledged they are much altered and interpolated. Such as they are, I must content myself with referring our readers to Lardner's *Credibility*,* for an account of them, having never had an opportunity of consulting them myself.

It seems to be sufficiently acknowledged, that the earliest general opinion concerning our Lord's ministry was that of its being confined to one year; but of the manner in which any person who held that opinion distributed the particular events of the Gospel history we have no knowledge. However, that a proper distribution of them on this plan is very easy and obvious, I hope I have sufficiently shewn in my own arrangement of them, within the same limits. That confusion and embarrassment have been the consequence of extending the ministry of Christ beyond the term above-mentioned, I think I have also sufficiently shewn. And it will be no less apparent to us in the very first attempts to explain the history of Christ upon this plan, if we consider the hints

* *Part ii. (P.) Works*, ii. pp. 137 138, 417—430. Lardner seems disposed "to digest the history of the public life of John the Baptist and our Saviour" in the manner of the Harmony attributed to *Tatian*, according to which "our Lord's ministry—lasted about two years and a half." *Ibid.* pp. 424, 425.

that have been given by *Eusebius* and *Epiphanius*, the only writers among the ancients who appear to have given much attention to the subject.

The Harmony of *Tatian*, the disciple of Justin Martyr, is said by Chemnitius * to have comprised the whole history of the Gospel from the baptism to the suffering of Christ within one year † but according to Dr. Lardner, it included the space of two years. ‡

Leaving this uncertain, the next opinion on the subject is that of *Irenæus*, in which I believe he always was, and ever will be, quite singular; viz. that Christ, beginning at thirty years of age, preached till he was forty or fifty. All that we know of his arrangement is, that he made the feast mentioned *John* v. 1, to be a passover, in which also, according to Dr. Lardner, § he was not generally followed. But it seems, though on what authority does not appear, (that it was from the reading of *πασχα* in *John* vi. 4, is by no means certain or probable,) to have been afterwards generally believed, that our Lord's ministry extended to two years. We have no hints, however, given us of the arrangement of the events of the Gospel history according to this plan till after the time of *Eusebius*, who concluded, but from no good reason that appears, that our Lord's preaching extended to three years and a half.

He says it may be collected from *John's* Gospel; but he does not specify the passovers mentioned in that Gospel; and that the passover in *John* vi. 4, was not one of them, is, I think, probable, for the reason alleged before.

His argument from external historical considerations is deemed by Dr. Lardner, and must be by every body, extremely weak and inconclusive. || Because *Luke* says that Christ preached in the high-priesthoods of *Annas* and *Caiaphas*, he concluded that he must have begun in that of *Annas*, and have ended in that of *Caiaphas*; and because, according to *Josephus*, ¶ the high-priesthoods of *Ishmael* and *Eleazar* came between them, he, without any authority from *Josephus*, supposed that they all held this office an entire year. He must consequently have supposed that Christ died in the first year of the high-priesthood of *Caiaphas*. But according to *Josephus* this must have been pretty early in the govern-

* Martin Chemnitz, a Lutheran Divine. See *supra*, p. 143, Note §.

† *Prolegomena* [to *Harmonia Evangelorum*], p. 9. (P.)

‡ And a half, or three passovers. See *supra* p. 191, Note.

§ *Works*, IV. p. 318; V. p. 331.

|| "Absurd and groundless." *Works*, IV. p. 246.

¶ *Antiq. L.* xviii. C. ii. Sect. ii.

ment of *Valerius Gratus*, and considerably before the time of *Pontius Pilate*, evidently contrary to the Gospel history.

Notwithstanding this, he reckons the years of *Tiberius* from the death of *Augustus*; so that his fifteenth year was A. D. 28. Consequently *John*, according to him, beginning to baptize in that year, he must have concluded that Christ suffered A. D. 32, which was probably the fifth or sixth of Pilate.

Eusebius supposes that presently after his baptism, our Lord began to preach, and called the twelve apostles; and that presently after this event *John* was beheaded.* And yet, notwithstanding the rapid succession of these events, he preached so privately and inoffensively, as to have done nothing that is recorded by the three first evangelists for two years and a half, all which two years he elsewhere says was before the imprisonment of *John*. Whereas, by the clear testimony of all the evangelists, our Lord did not choose the twelve apostles till a considerable time after the imprisonment of *John*, and in the midst of the most active part of his ministry.

That an opinion so weakly and inconsistently supported should become the prevailing one, and continue so to this day, is not a little extraordinary. And, indeed, notwithstanding the great reputation of *Eusebius*, especially as an historian, and though his opinion concerning the whole time of our Lord's ministry be now generally received, it was by no means the case with those who immediately followed him. For we find the opinion of the two years and a half's duration of Christ's ministry in, I believe, all that we properly call the *fathers* who succeeded him, especially in Epiphanius.

From this writer, in his account of the *Alogi*, who believed that the whole of Christ's ministry was confined to little more than one entire year, we learn more distinctly what were the ideas of Christians of his age concerning the manner in which our Lord passed his time before that year, the events of which, as they all agree, are related by *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, viz. in preaching *without any opposition*, so that nothing is related by these three evangelists but the laborious and *contentious* part of his ministry.

His general positions are, that Christ was born on the eighth of the *Ides* (that is, the sixth) of January, in the 42d year of *Augustus* (reckoning from the death of *Julius Cæsar*), that is, two years before the vulgar Christian æra; that he

* *Hist. L. i. C. x. xi. (P.)*

was baptized on the sixth of the ides (that is, the eighth) of November, in the fifteenth of Tiberius, reckoning from the death of Augustus; making it to correspond to A. D. 28, and that he died A. D. 30, when *Venutius* and *Cassius Longinus* were consuls, having preached through the whole year 29, in which the *Gemini* were consuls. *

Placing the baptism of Jesus a little after the feast of *tabernacles*, he supposes him to have preached from that time, without any opposition, a whole year, which he weakly enough calls "the acceptable year;" and then from the feast of *tabernacles* following, through the whole of the ensuing year, to have been violently opposed; and that in the pass-over after that complete year of opposition he suffered.

But I shall give our readers a better idea of this harmonizer, if I partly translate and partly abridge a few passages from him. He says, "after the expiration of his thirtieth year, Christ came to be baptized, and after the same thirtieth year he preached the whole acceptable year of the Lord, without any opposition. He afterwards went through a year of opposition from the Jews, in which he suffered much from their vexation and envy, and moreover entered upon a third year; so that in all he lived 32 years and 74 days."† In this we see how little regard was paid to the fancies of *Irenæus*, by a writer who lived about two centuries after him, and indeed to the opinion of *Eusebius*, who flourished about half a century before *Epiphanius*. But to proceed with my extracts.

"At his baptism," he says, "Christ was 29 years and 10 months old. After this followed the forty days' temptation, then a stay of about two weeks at Nazareth, then a day or two with John. When he had left John, we reckon two days more for the call first of Andrew and then of Peter. In another day, Philip and Nathanael were called. The third day after these two last was the marriage feast at Cana, where he performed his first miracle, being then exactly thirty years old.

"The disciples above-mentioned having then left him, he was joined by others, with whom he went to Capernaum, afterwards to Nazareth, and then again to Capernaum, where he performed some miracles, as the cure of the withered hand, and of Peter's wife's mother. Then returning again to Nazareth, he read in the prophecy of Isaiah, and was rejected. From thence he fled for fear of Herod, and after his flight remained

* *Opera*, VI. p. 446. (P.)

† *Opera*, I. p. 449. (P.)

at Nazareth. He then retired to the desert, and returning from thence, began to preach." *

Afterwards, he says, "It is plain that Christ preached *the acceptable year* in which no person opposed him. For the first year after the thirtieth of his incarnation he preached with universal approbation, so that neither Jews, Heathens, nor Samaritans opposed him, but all heard him gladly. In this year he went up to Jerusalem, after he had been baptized, and passed through the forty days' temptation, and chose his disciples. Having returned from the temptation, to Jordan, and travelled to the sea of Tiberias, and to Nazareth, he went up to Jerusalem, and in the midst of the feast cried, saying, 'If any one thirst, let him come unto me and drink,' (*John* vii. 37,) and then he returned to Nazareth, and Judea, and Samaria, and the country about Tyre.

"The first year being accomplished, he again went up to Jerusalem, and then they sought to apprehend him in the feast, but were afraid. At this feast he said, *I do not yet go up to the feast*. And they said, (*John* vii. 25, &c.) 'Is not this he whom they sought to apprehend, and behold he speaketh boldly?'

"After these things, two years and some months" (which he particularly specifies) "being elapsed, he suffered in the month of March, in the year after the consulship of the Gemini." †

What little countenance these notions, and this arrangement, have from the Scriptures, I need not tell your Lordship. We find no hint there of any period in our Saviour's ministry in which he was not opposed. The jealousy of the high-priests was excited at the very first passover, before any mention is made of his preaching. It was on their hearing of his making "more disciples than John" that he thought of retiring from *Judæa* into *Galilee*. In the feast mentioned *John* v. 1, we read, *ver.* 16, that the Jews persecuted him, and sought to slay him. And this feast, whatever it was, must have been a considerable time before the feast mentioned in the viith chapter, at which he dates the opposition to Christ's ministry. Nay the passover in *John* vi. 4, as your Lordship supposes, must have intervened between it and that in the viith chapter, which is expressly said to be the feast of *tabernacles*.

I therefore think that, since all the ancients were agreed that the *active* part of our Lord's ministry, all that part in

* *Opera*, I. p. 439. (P.)

† *Ibid.* I. p. 447. (P.)

which they say he met with any opposition, and all that is related by the three first evangelists, was confined to one year, we are sufficiently authorized by this tradition, and the plainest sense of scripture together, to reject all that supposed part of our Lord's ministry which passed *without opposition*, and to limit *the whole* to one year.

So little attention, we see, had *Epiphanius* given, even to *John's Gospel*, where only this pretended "acceptable year" is to be found; that, if I understand him at all, he makes two feasts of what *John* makes but one, and a long journey to come between them. And what is still more extraordinary, the incident mentioned as belonging to the first feast is subsequent to those which he mentions as belonging to the latter, as will appear by comparing the quotations in the passage recited above. His account of our Lord's visits to *Nazareth*, and his journeys from that place to *Capernaum* and back again, is exceedingly confused.

I much suspect the account he gives of the objections that the *Alogi* made to *John's Gospel*. "They found fault," he says, "with the Gospel of John, because he relates the attendance of Christ at two passovers; whereas the other evangelists only mention his attendance at one, viz. the last; though," he adds, "they might have observed a third passover mentioned in John's Gospel, viz. that at which he suffered."* But how does Christ's attendance at two passovers affect their hypothesis, when they supposed that his ministry lasted at least a whole year; and consequently there must have been two passovers, at which he might have attended?

I cannot help expressing my surprise that Dr. Lardner should incline to the opinion of *Epiphanius*, and others of that age, of Christ's preaching a year without opposition." He says, "In St. John's Gospel are three passovers, and our Saviour's ministry has two years and a part; but the former part of his ministry there related was not so public as that after John's imprisonment. In the other three evangelists, who relate chiefly our Lord's most public preaching, after John the Baptist's imprisonment, is the history of only somewhat more than the space of one year. How much more is not very easy to say."†

Dr. Lardner, however, says of the Harmony ascribed to *Tatian*, that the author "does not suppose the 'feast of the Jews' mentioned John v. i, to have been passover, but pentecost," and he says, "this is a mark of antiquity,"‡ he him-

* *Opera*, I. p. 444. (P.) † *Credibility*, Pt. ii. (P.) *Works*, II. pp. 423, 424.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 423.

self finding no intimation of any passover between the first mentioned by *John* and the last at which our Lord suffered, but that in *John* vi. 4. * It is plain, however, that *Irenæus* considered the feast mentioned *John* v. 1, as a passover, and so I think must *Epiphanius* and *Eusebius* have done.

Of all the modern professed harmonizers, *Lami*† is the only one that I know who has followed the plan of those of the fathers who distributed the business of our Lord's ministry into two years; but his arrangement of the events is such as I imagine will not give much satisfaction, since the lights that have been thrown upon the Gospel history, of late years, and especially in this country.

Before the passover in which our Lord had the interview with *Nicodemus*, he places a great part of Christ's preaching in Galilee, and even the mission of the twelve, and the upbraiding of the cities in which the chief of his mighty works were done. He also places the scene of Jesus's preaching in Enon, while *John* was baptizing there, in the August after this passover. Then comes the journey through *Samaria*, the conversation with the woman of *Sychar*, and the rejection at *Nazareth*. In the January following he places the imprisonment of *John*, ‡ in the month following his death; and in March after this, *Herod* hears of Jesus, and supposes him to have been "John risen from the dead."

SECTION XV.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

I. *Of the first Excursion from Capernaum.*

YOUR Lordship contends, that our Lord's first excursion from *Capernaum* must have required more than a week. § But, except the general expression of going "about all Galilee," &c., on which certainly no great stress can be laid, your Lordship cannot find any particulars of that excursion that can be supposed to have required a week. All that I find are, his visiting some unnamed towns, with which

* *Works*, II. p. 425.

† Bernard Lami, *Priest of the Oratory*, who died at Rouen in 1715, aged 70. Besides several other works in science and theology, he published in 2 vols. 4to. *Harmonia sive Concordia Evangelica*.

‡ According to one of his French biographers, *Lami* supposed two imprisonments of *John*: "La première fois par l'ordre des Prêtres et des Pharisiens; la seconde par celui d'Herode." *Nouv. Dict. Hist.* IV. p. 31.

§ *Reply*, p. 77. (P.) "I allow three weeks for Jesus's residence in Capernaum, Matt. iv. 13: and transactions follow for which, in my opinion, less than a month cannot be allowed, but which you include within a week." *Ibid*.

Galilee was very thick sown, the Sermon on the Mount, and the cure of a leper. And I must again insist upon it, that unless, in any case, so much business be distinctly *specified*, as would necessarily require more time than my hypothesis admits, supported as it is by various external and independent evidence, I cannot relinquish it. On a variety of occasions, your Lordship may think that more time than my hypothesis admits would have been *better*. But it is enough for me if it always allows *sufficient* time, though it may now and then be thought scanty. In general, it gives more time than is wanted.

II. *Of the Time of the Journey to Nain.*

To lengthen out the time of our Lord's journeying, your Lordship appears to me to put a harsh and improbable construction on the words of *Luke*, in describing the journey to *Nain*. After mentioning the cure of the centurion's servant in *Capernaum*, he says, (vii. 11,) "And it came to pass, the day after, that he went into a city called Nain." With respect to which your Lordship says, "It is by no means necessary to suppose—that he performed this journey in one day, accompanied as he was by many of his disciples, and much people: the evangelist may mean that he undertook the journey on the next day, not that he finished it."*

Now admitting that the words of the evangelist *may* bear this construction, (though I do not think that they will,) I should not have recourse to it without some more urgent occasion than merely to gain a single day, and a day that I can very well spare your Lordship. On a former occasion your Lordship said, that "because *Luke* asserted a thing, you believed it." I should think, therefore, that in this case, rather than depart from the obvious meaning of his words, you might suppose with me, that, on this and some other occasions, our Lord might not travel on foot. Not that a walk of twenty miles appears so formidable a thing to all persons as it may to your Lordship. And persons used to walking, as our Saviour and his apostles probably were, do not find it very fatiguing, unless unfavourable circumstances relating to the weather or the roads, &c. contribute to make it so.

III. *Of the Second Sabbath after the First.*

As to the difficult phrase of *δευτεροπρωτος*, *Luke* vi. 1,

* *Reply*, pp. 89, 90. (P.)

which we render “the second sabbath after the first,” your Lordship knows that commentators are by no means agreed about it, and therefore there can be no apparent difficulty in my placing the transaction of plucking the ears of corn, as I do, after the passover, and consequently after the oblation of the first-fruits, or while any corn may be supposed to have been standing in the fields.

Your Lordship thinks, “with many commentators, that by what we translate *the second sabbath after the first*, St. Luke means the *first* sabbath after the *second* day of the paschal feast.”* But to this I think there are several obvious objections. Considering that the feast of *passover* lasted eight days, the first sabbath after the second of those days might be the third day of the feast, and would generally fall before the expiration of it. Supposing what is most favourable to your Lordship, and against which there is just seven to one, that the sabbath preceding this should have been the very second day of the feast, this δευτεροπρωτος, or first sabbath after it, would be the first day after the complete expiration of the feast. And if our Lord continued at Jerusalem the whole eight days of the feast, (and whenever your Lordship thinks me straitened for time you do not allow me a single day in this case,) he could not have been in Galilee, the scene of this transaction, in time for it.

Besides, I cannot think that corn was in general ready to pluck and eat so soon after, or rather *in* the passover; the Jewish calendar being so adjusted, that the first corn in the country, generally, I believe, *unripe*, was presented at that time; the feast of *pentecost*, which was fifty days after the passover, being called the feast of harvest. By making this sabbath the fourth after the *passover*, or in the year I have pitched upon, on the first of April, I believe I have, without intending it, hit upon a day as proper for this transaction as any whatever; whereas your Lordship has been rather unfortunate in this respect.

IV. *Of the Disciples of John.*

In considering whether John the Baptist or our Lord made more disciples, which I shall not particularly discuss, your Lordship† omits the circumstance on which, in my own mind, I laid the greatest stress, which is, that at the last passover, long after the death of *John*, our Lord silenced the Jewish doctors by asking them, whether “the baptism

* *Reply*, pp. 11, 12. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 31. (P.)

of John" was "from heaven or of men;" when it appeared that they did not venture to say openly that it was "of men," because they feared the people; *all men* holding "John as a prophet." *Matt.* xxi. 26; *Mark* xi. 32; *Luke* xx. 6.

THE CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now urged all that occurs to me for the present on the subject of our amicable debate, and I hope I shall soon have the pleasure of hearing from your Lordship again. And having now, I thank God, recovered in a great measure, my former health and spirits, and being at length completely settled in my new situation, I shall be able, if nothing unforeseen prevent me, to give a more speedy reply to your next Letter than I have done to the last, and so the controversy will sooner come to its proper termination.

Your Lordship is pleased to speak of our differing "in some conclusions of greater importance" than those we are now controverting.* Of this I am fully apprized; the articles of your Lordship's faith, as a member of the Church of England, being upon record, and mine being sufficiently known by my writings, as also the stress I lay upon them, as opposed to the tenets of all the established churches in the world. Yet, my Lord, it gives me more pleasure to reflect that, notwithstanding these very considerable differences, there are still greater things in which we both agree, and on which we both, I hope, lay still greater stress; and they are things in which all persons who call themselves Christians are agreed.

We both believe in a God, the intelligent Author of nature, in his constant over-ruling providence, and in his righteous moral government. We both believe in the divine origin of the Jewish and Christian revelations, that Christ was a teacher sent from God, that he is our master, law-giver and judge, that God raised him from the dead, that he is now exalted at the right hand of God, that he will come again to raise all the dead, and sit in judgment upon them, and that he will then give to every one of us according to our works.

These, I need not tell your Lordship, are, properly speaking, the only *great truths of religion*, because they are

those which have the greatest influence on our conduct ; and to these not only the Church of *England*, and the Church of *Scotland*, but even the Church of *Rome* gives its assent. If we sufficiently attend to the importance of these great truths, and give ourselves up to the full influence of them, we shall all *love as brethren*, notwithstanding all lesser differences, and especially such as we are now discussing.

Whether our Lord preached one year or three years, three years or thirty years, we are perfectly agreed with respect to the great *object* of his preaching, and the obligation we are under to regulate our lives according to it ; and from the catalogue of proper Christian virtues, we can never exclude humility, benevolence, or candour. We must judge others as we would be judged ourselves, waiting for the final sentence of our great and common judge, Jesus Christ. *

The time is, in reality, not far distant, when both your Lordship and myself shall know, from the first authority, which of us, or whether either of us, is in the right, with respect to the subject of our present controversy ; and I hope we shall both in this, and in all other respects, so conduct ourselves, as to have no reason to wish it were more distant ; but that, when our Lord shall *return, and take an account of his servants*, and of the use we have made of the *talents* with which we have severally been entrusted, *we shall not be ashamed before him at his coming*.

With the greatest respect, I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient, humble servant,

Birmingham,
December 1, 1780.

J. PRIESTLEY.

* The four preceding paragraphs were quoted by Dr. Priestley in 1790, at the Conclusion of the *Familiar Letters*. See Vol. XIX. pp. 303, 304.



A

THIRD LETTER TO DR. NEWCOME,

BISHOP OF WATERFORD.

[Birmingham, 1781.]

MY LORD,

I AM equally struck with the *ingenuity* and the *candour* of your Lordship's Reply to my last Letter,* and I am satisfied that in no other hands could the hypothesis you have adopted have appeared to more advantage. Still, however, I cannot help thinking, after the most attentive consideration, that what you have urged is far from invalidating what I advanced, and that, in several respects, it even affords additional support to my argument. The observations which I have made to this purpose, your Lordship's candour encourages me to propose with the same freedom with which we have both proceeded hitherto, making a point of being as brief as possible, and leaving those passages of your Lordship's Letter, on which I make no animadversion, to make what impression they may on our common readers.

SECTION I.

Of the Testimony of the Christian Fathers. †

IN order to be as little tiresome as possible, I shall say but little with respect to the testimony of the primitive Christians. Your Lordship acknowledges "the prevalence of *my* hypothesis" in the primitive times, "but not its universality;"‡ and this prevalence (especially so early as the opinion of our Lord's ministry not having extended much beyond *one year* may be traced) cannot, I think, be

* "A Reply to a Second Letter on the Duration of our Lord's Ministry from the Rev. Joseph Priestley, L.L. D. F. R. S. By William Newcome, D. D. Bishop of Waterford." *Dublin*, 1781.

† *Reply*, pp. 4—29.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 12. (P.)

satisfactorily accounted for on the supposition of its having ever been the *universal* opinion, that he preached *three years and a half*.

Such an opinion as this last mentioned, could not have died away very suddenly. The apostles, and all those who conversed with our Lord, must have known how long he preached; and as their preaching consisted, probably, for the most part, in relating the history of Christ, *notes of time* would necessarily mix with it, and this would continue the original tradition much later, I should think, than the time when the opinion that I contend for, is known to have prevailed. A departure from this opinion in *after times*, is not very difficult to account for; but that, in a matter of history and *tradition*, the erroneous opinion should be the oldest that we can find, is, certainly, not natural.

Your Lordship grants, that "the opinion" I contend for "may be traced to about A. D. 150," and "that the *Alogi* held this doctrine as well as the Valentinians."* But the origin of the *Alogi* seems to have been in the remotest Christian antiquity. *Epiphanius*, who gives a large account of them, does not pretend to give them any date; and as he found them without a name, it is most probable that in most respects, they were among the Gentiles what the *Nazarenes* were among the Jews, and the earliest converts to Christianity. Opinions, therefore, universally held by them were most probably handed down to them (especially as few of them were learned) from the first promulgation of our religion.

You say, "On a review of the passages quoted from Origen and Eusebius, I doubt whether there be that exact agreement between your system and theirs which you suppose. According to you, there was the precise interval of a year, between that passover, at which Jesus first exercised his prophetic office in Jerusalem, and that at which he was crucified. But we cannot discover what space of time elapsed, according to Origen and Eusebius, between the first passover and the imprisonment of John the Baptist."†

But, my Lord, as the ancients, in general, say that the three first evangelists relate the events of *one year only*, and they all mention the baptism of Jesus, which was some time before the first passover, if any other passover intervened between this and that on which he suffered, they

* *Reply*, p. 23. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 7. (P.)

must have comprehended in their narrative *two years and a few months*. And though, speaking in a general way, *a year* may be extended to a few months more than a year, it cannot reasonably be interpreted to mean some months more than *two years*. If, as I suppose, the imprisonment of John happened within a fortnight after the first passover, the ancient writers saying *a year* intervened between that event and the next passover, is easily accounted for; the term *year* being a whole number, and within a few days of the truth.

Your Lordship says, that “the progress of the human mind is generally slow, and its first attempts feeble on every nice subject.”* But this, my Lord, is the case only in matters of *reasoning*, and would have applied here, if, without any previous tradition, or information concerning the subject, the four Gospels had been put into men’s hands, and they had been left to investigate the chronology of them as well as they could.

But this was far from being the case with the Gospel history. When the evangelical writings appeared, the history of Christ was previously well known, so that the idea of the duration of his ministry would not be derived from those books. The received opinion, whatever it was, had taken its rise long before. How this opinion should have been so very different, as your Lordship supposes, from the truth, must be accounted for on some other principle than “the slowness of the human mind in its investigations.”

I do not see to what purpose your Lordship produces the authority of *Grotius* and others, in favour of the hypothesis of *one year* having taken its rise from the interpretation of the passage in *Isaiah*, (lxi. 2,) in which mention is made of “the acceptable year of the Lord.” Your Lordship’s own opinion would weigh much more with me than theirs, because you have given more attention to the subject than they appear to have done. But it is *natural probability* and not *authority*, that is of any weight here; and this, I think, is clearly in favour of the interpretation having been occasioned by the opinion, and not the opinion by the interpretation. Nor could *Valentinus*, with any face, have proposed such an interpretation of that prophecy, when he did not previously know that it was supported by the *fact*, or was supposed to be so. His venturing on such an interpretation is, therefore, a proof of the current opinion being in favour of it.

You acknowledge, that the primitive Christian writers must have thought that our Lord's ministry was comprised within one year, unless they computed the years of *Tiberius* in a manner different from St. Luke." * For it cannot be denied that they all reckoned his years from the death of *Augustus*. But can your Lordship think it probable, either that *Luke* should use a manner of computation different from that of all other chronologers and historians whatever, or that the primitive Christians, conversant as they were with the evangelical writings, should use the same language with *Luke*, in what they knew to be a quite different sense; calling that the 15th of *Tiberius*, which they were satisfied would have been the 18th with *Luke*, and at the same time affix it to the same event? This I think in the highest degree improbable, and the authority of *Le Clerc*, *Lardner*, *Pilkington*, *Macknight*, *Pearce*, &c., with which you urge me, weighs nothing with me in favour of it.

Because some of the Christian fathers reckoned the year in which *Augustus* died, to him, and others to *Tiberius*, you say, "I may as justly require authority for this computation of *Tiberius*'s reign from the first of January, and not from the 19th of August, as you demand an instance of reckoning his years from his becoming colleague in the empire, and not from the death of his predecessor." †

But, certainly, the difference of *three years* is a much more considerable thing than of *three months*, and therefore may be more easily traced. In fact, however, your Lordship does not deny but that all historians and chronologers, without exception, date the years of *Tiberius* from the death of *Augustus*.

SECTION II.

Of the Conduct of Luke in giving a Date to the Preaching of John the Baptist, ‡ &c.

I HAVE said that the conduct of *Luke*, in giving a very circumstantial date to the beginning of our Lord's ministry, and leading his readers to conclude, from the course of his narrative, that his death took place in the year following, is hardly consistent with the supposition of three years having intervened between them. Such a mode of writing is, I say, unnatural.

But you say, that it is not *singular*; for "Sallust has

* *Reply*, p. 19. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 21. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 30—37.

dated the beginning of the Catilinarian conspiracy about the calends of June, in the consulships of Lucius Cæsar, and Caius Figulus; and he has given no date to that more remarkable event, the battle in which Catiline fell. It should follow, therefore, by your way of arguing, that the conspiracy was quashed the year after it broke out.—Yet the fact is, that this memorable defeat did not happen under the succeeding consulships of Cicero and Antonius; but in the beginning of the year when Silanus and Muræna were consuls.”*

Now this appears to me to be a very imperfect parallel. All that can be said with respect to *Sallust* is, that, being intent on relating a connected series of interesting events, he neglected to mention the termination of one particular year, and carried his reader to the beginning of the next only, without any notice of it. But can your Lordship think that he would have done so, if the war had continued *three* years? Or was it indeed possible, that any contemporary historian should have related transactions of that continuance without leaving some traces of their having extended to more than one year, which is the case with *Luke*? I therefore think that his conduct is a very considerable argument in favour of my hypothesis, and against that of your Lordship, notwithstanding this instance of *Sallust*.

I do not expect, as you seem to think, that *Luke* should have written like “a *regular annalist*,” † giving express dates to the events of every year; but I should expect that, having dated the beginning of his history with much greater precision than *Sallust* has done, he would not afterwards have related events of three years and a half, without giving some intimation, directly or indirectly, of his history having extended beyond one year. If it had had that extent, I think it would hardly have been possible for him, without very particular design, not to have left sufficient traces of it.

Besides, it should be considered, that the Roman historian had no other object but that of telling his story in the most pleasing and interesting manner, and therefore would more naturally pass by a date, if it interrupted the course of his narrative; as it would have done very remarkably in this particular case, when what he had related as having passed in the city, had so close a connexion with what was passing in the field.

* *Reply*, pp. 31, 32.

† *Ibid.* p. 35. (P.)

SECTION III.

*Of the Ignorance of Herod, and of other Jews, concerning Jesus, at the Time of the Death of John the Baptist.**

YOUR Lordship candidly allows, that “the difficulty” of accounting “for Herod’s ignorance” concerning Jesus till after the death of *John the Baptist* “is greater” on your hypothesis than on mine, I supposing him not to have heard of Jesus till after a very *few weeks*, and your Lordship not till after *two years*; but you say, “The defect of your argument is, that any conceivable method of accounting for Herod’s ignorance may be the true one.” †

I think, however, that this case is so very particularly circumstanced, that there is hardly any conceivable method of accounting for it, and therefore that it nearly amounts to a demonstration of my hypothesis.

Your Lordship, finding that *Herod* could not be absent from his dominions, in this interval, on his expedition against *Aretas*, or at Rome, *for any political purpose*, as you first conjectured, now says, “A journey to Rome which was not undertaken for a political purpose may have been unnoticed by the Jewish historian.” ‡ But can this be probable, when *Josephus* expressly says, that it was with difficulty that he was prevailed upon by his wife to go to Rome for the most important political purpose, having conceived a great aversion to that court? And we have no account of any prince of those times going such a journey for mere pleasure.

Besides, having quarrelled with *Aretas* by divorcing his daughter, and expecting a war on that account, it is not very probable that he would *then* think of a journey of pleasure, which would necessarily detain him so long from his own dominions. Princes seldom travel with expedition, and much less could they do so in those times. A year and four months, which your Lordship allows to the imprisonment of *John*, would, I should think, have hardly been sufficient for the purpose.

You also say that, “though Herod was not actually engaged in an expedition against *Aretas*,” he might be “occupied on the eastern side of Jordan, in preparing for one;” observing, that this river “seems to have been passable in

* *Reply*, pp. 38—43.

† *Ibid.* pp. 39, 40. (*P.*)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 40. (*P.*)

a very few places.” * But certainly this river, † which is not so big as the Thames, cannot be impassable by boats in any place, and only *one* constant place of passage was quite sufficient for this purpose, which was not the passage of an army, but only the conveyance of a piece of news. Your Lordship will also consider that *Peræa* is the very country, or contiguous to it, in which you suppose our Saviour to have made some considerable stay, so as to have made more disciples there than *John* did, before his journey to Galilee. Jesus, therefore, might have been heard of in that country, though no account should have been transmitted concerning him from Galilee. Besides, since this expedition against *Aretas* did not take place till after the death of *John the Baptist*, and probably that of our Saviour too, the preparation which you suppose he was then making for it must have been a considerable time before-hand, and therefore could hardly engage much of his attention.

You observe, that “ Herod might have neglected reports about a worker of miracles, from the commonness of such pretensions in those days.” ‡ Now so far was it, as it appears to me, from such pretensions being common in those days, that I do not find the least trace of any such thing. From the time of *Malachi* there had not been a prophet, or even a pretender to the gift of prophecy, among the Jews; and *John the Baptist*, though a prophet, worked no miracle. *Judas the Gaulonite*, § who set up the standard of liberty, did not, however, pretend to any miraculous power, and even near the siege of Jerusalem those impostors who deluded the people to their destruction, did it by *promises* only of what they *would* do, and did not pretend to exhibit, or to have exhibited, any real miracle. Your Lordship allows, that there had been a cessation of miraculous powers near five hundred years. ||

In the time of Herod, therefore, pretensions to miracles must have excited the greatest possible attention; and this would be more so in a nation whose ancestors had been accustomed to them, and from whom they had been withdrawn for so many years, than in any other nation in the world, or in any other circumstances of the same nation. This I consider as a great mark of the wisdom of God in preparing for

* *Reply*, pp. 41, 42. (P.)

† Which *Maunderl* found to be “about twenty yards over.” *Travels*, p. 83.

‡ *Reply*, p. 39. (P.)

§ See *Josephus's Antig.* B. xviii. Ch. i. Sect. i. vi., *War*, B. ii. Ch. viii. Sect. i.

|| *Reply*, p. 106. (P.)

the Gospel dispensation, so as to make the evidence of it the most striking and illustrious possible. That, in these circumstances of the Jewish nation above all others, *Herod*, or any other Jew, the most negligent of his religion, (and with respect to Herod himself I may almost say either *in*, or *out* of his country,) should be two years without hearing of Jesus, is altogether incredible. But Herod does not only not appear to have been out of his country any part of this time, but was certainly in it *some* part of it, and, as we are informed, gave particular attention to *John the Baptist*.

“Our Lord attended,” you say, “only two feasts at Jerusalem before the fame of him reached Herod.”* But your Lordship must have meant two *passovers*, without considering that there were three other feasts in the year on which the Jews of those times statedly attended. According to your own *Harmony*, there must have been *seven* public festivals in that interval.

SECTION IV.

Of the Interpolation of the word PASSOVER in John vi. 4. †

I ACKNOWLEDGE with your Lordship, that the word *πασχα* is found in all our MSS. of *John vi. 4*, and even in Ammonius, ‡ which, not having the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, which you quote for it, § I was ignorant of before. But what is this, compared with the weight of argument which I have produced, || to prove that *Irenæus* could not have seen any such reading, and the great improbability that even *Eusebius* had seen it? They had just the same occasion for this word with your Lordship, their hypothesis equally requiring it; and the former, I doubt not, was much more eager in his controversy with the *Valentinians* than your Lordship is in this with me; and he professes to enumerate all the passovers at which our Lord attended in Jerusalem, merely for the sake of computing the years of his ministry. Would he, in this state of mind, have omitted any passover expressly mentioned by an evangelist, only because our Lord was not said to have attended at it?

If, as you say, this writer might think it “an *impiety* that our Lord should not attend so solemn a Jewish festival as the passover,” ¶ he would certainly have presumed that he

* *Reply*, p. 41. (P.)

† *Ibid.* pp. 43—52.

‡ “Post hæc erat in proximo Pascha, dies festus Judæorum. Bibl. Patr. III. 284.” *Newcome*.

§ *Reply*, p. 43. (P.)

Supra, pp. 53, 54, 132, 133.

¶ *Reply*, pp. 48, 49.

had attended, when the passover had really happened, and his attendance was only not expressed; as, if the evangelist had said that he did *not* attend, it would have precluded this writer's opinion of the impiety of such conduct. But this opinion of the impiety of not attending these festivals, in *Irenæus* is merely conjectural, and I think very improbable.

On no account, therefore, can it be supposed that *Irenæus* would voluntarily have omitted the recital of this, or any passover, *expressly mentioned* by an evangelist, whether he thought our Lord had attended it, or not. On this I cannot help laying considerable stress, as I think it proves that, whatever be the case with all the MSS. now extant, (which are all comparatively of late date,) those in the time of *Irenæus* had not the word *πασχα* in the place in question, and therefore that it was not in *John's* original copy.

But your Lordship mentions another case which you think parallel to this. It was, it seems, a constant opinion among the fathers, that *Elias* the Tishbite would make his appearance in person before the second coming of Christ,* and therefore that, arguing as I do, I must suppose *Matt.* xvii. 12, in which our Lord says, "I say unto you, that *Elias* is come already," to be spurious. Now really I do not perceive a shadow of parallelism in the two cases, because these fathers might very well think that *John the Baptist* might come *in the spirit and power of Elias* at the first coming of Christ, and that *Elias* might make his appearance *in person* at the second coming. This text, therefore, does by no means stand in the way of their opinion. But no person can see the express mention of *three passovers* in the course of our Lord's ministry, and entertain the opinion that it lasted only one year. This is an absolute *impossibility*, as your Lordship must feel, in making so much use of this text against my hypothesis; whereas in the other case, there is no inconsistency at all. The opinion that *Elias* will come in person before the second coming of Christ is maintained by some persons at this day, who are far from thinking the text you have mentioned any objection to it.

The learned Dr. Burnet not only maintained the future coming of *Elias* in person, but even quotes in proof of it the very passage in the Gospels that you think irreconcilable with it, † and in another excellent work just published, and

* *Reply*, p. 47. (P.) "‘Constans est patrum et totius ecclesiæ sententia,’ says Whitby, (Strict. Patr. Præf. xvii.,) ‘*Eliam* Thisbitam personaliter venturum esse, ante secundum Christi adventum.’” *Ibid.*

† *De Statu Mortuorum*, 1728, p. 395. (P.) “Qui negant *Eliam* adhuc venturum

which I am confident your Lordship will read, as I have done, with great satisfaction, I find the same opinion and the same passage, (*Matt.* xvii. 10—12,) quoted in support of it. *

It will hardly be wondered at that, in my former *letter*, † I did not understand why you supposed there would be any want of force in the observation mentioned *John* vii. 1, ("After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews, sought to kill him,") if the word *passover* should be expunged from *chap.* vi. 4. For certainly the mention of "the Jews' feast of tabernacles" in the verse immediately following that in which his determination to continue in *Galilee* is spoken of, has a much nearer connexion with that observation than the *passover* which was mentioned so long before; and it is just as much to the purpose. Nay, since the evangelist expressly refers to the feast of tabernacles on this occasion, a reference to another feast, which preceded it near half a year, is necessarily excluded. It was after every thing that is related in the sixth chapter, that *Jesus's walking in Galilee*, in preference to *Judea*, is so much as mentioned.

SECTION V.

Of the Transposition of the 5th and 6th Chapters of the Gospel of John. ‡

I AM far from denying that the transposition of the 5th

Joannem Baptistam habent pro solo et unico Eliâ, nec alium putant esse expectandum; sustinuit quidem vices et personam Eliæ Baptista, et muneris ipsius partes pro tempore; at si unicus fuisset Elias, (ex omni parte et tempore,) à Prophetâ prædictus, haud negasset, opinor, explicitis verbis se esse Eliam, cùm de eâ re interrogaretur, *Johan.* i. 21. Proinde mihi satius videtur supponere, ut supra innuimus, Baptistam fuisse typum Eliæ prophetici, nec illud impedire quo minus veniat suo tempore alter Elias." *Appendix*, "De Futurâ Judæorum Restauratione." *Sect.* ii.

"They who deny that *Elias* is yet to come, suppose *John the Baptist* to be the only *Elias*, and that we ought not to expect any other: indeed the Baptist for a time did sustain the person and discharged the office of *Elias*; but if he was the only *Elias* (absolutely and as to all consideration) foretold by the prophet, I think he would not in express words have denied that he was *Elias*, when he was asked about that matter. (*John* i. 21.) It seems to me more reasonable to suppose, (as we have before hinted,) that the Baptist was a type of the prophetic *Elias*, which does by no means hinder the coming of another *Elias* in his proper time." *Foxton's Translation*, 1729, pp. 67, 68.

* See *Thoughts on the Nature of the Grand Apostacy*, p. 176, by Mr. Taylor, Rector of Crawley, &c. (P.) "There is one thing which plainly distinguished the first and second *Parousias* of Christ, from any such visitation, [the destruction of Jerusalem,] and that is, that they are both described as being preceded by a harbinging; the first by *John the Baptist*, the other by *Elias*, who was to come before the great and terrible day of the Lord, and restore all things. *Matt.* xvii. 10, 11; *Mal.* iv." *Ibid.*

† See *Reply*, pp. 51, 52.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 53—64.

and 6th chapters of John's Gospel is essential to my plan ; but I contend that, though there is no MS. in this order, the thing is far from being in itself improbable, especially considering the manner in which books were anciently written,* and that the connexion is much more natural in the arrangement I propose than in the present.

Tatian's, as your Lordship observes, having "transposed these chapters," † does not indeed prove that he *found* them so transposed ; but it shews that the improbability of their present order struck him as it did Mr. Mann, and those other modern critics whom your Lordship quotes. As to this transposition appearing, as you say, "to Dr. Doddridge very unwarrantable and dangerous," ‡ I must be allowed to say, that I do not feel myself at all affected by it. Some persons *fear where no fear is*, and many affect more fear than they really have.

Your Lordship, I acknowledge, has helped the connexion between the 5th and 6th *chapters* ; but still it must be allowed to be more natural to say, "After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee," that is, to the *eastern* side of it, after relating what had been transacted by him in the same country on the *western* side, than after what had passed in Jerusalem. And though the connexion between the sixth and seventh chapters is mended by observing, that Jesus *walking in Galilee* more naturally follows an account of transactions in Galilee, than his *going into Galilee* would do ; yet the whole verse (which is, "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee ; for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him") much more naturally follows an account of his being in Jerusalem at the time that a conspiracy was formed against his life in that place ; which account is found in the fifth chapter.

The only thing that your Lordship now particularly objects to my arrangement is, the reference to the *raising of the dead*, before the miracles of the raising of *Jairus's* daughter and the widow's son ; and yet when you consider what I say in favour of our Lord's referring to the *general resurrection* of all the dead, at the last day, and not to that of any *particular persons* in that time, you only say that the expression "*may refer*" to a particular resurrection. § Admitting this, my interpretation is still left the more probable of the two.

* See *supra*, p. 165 ; *Appendix*, No. VIII.

† *Reply*, p. 63. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 64. (P.) "See *Fam. Expos.* Sect. xlv. Note (a), lxxviii. Notes (6), (e).

§ "To our Lord's resurrection-miracles," are the Bishop's words, adding, "That our Lord might well oppose the future general resurrection to the future raising of a few during his ministry, is what, I conceive, none will doubt." *Reply*, p. 60.

The words "*and now is,*" on which your Lordship lays so much stress, * do not, when even literally interpreted, refer either backwards, to dead persons supposed to have been raised, or forwards, to any that our Lord might intend to raise. But, of the two, I think they would rather refer to something that his audience *could understand*, than to something that they could *not* understand; that is, to something that was passed, rather than to any thing that was future. The word *now*, in my opinion, very properly expresses the power our Lord had *in his then present state*, of which he had already given them a specimen, as a proof of his more eminent display of the same power hereafter.

Besides, all that my hypothesis wants in this case is, that the two chapters may be transposed without a manifest violation of the order of the history; so that, were the present arrangement even the more natural, it would not overturn my argument. In this respect, therefore, I have been able to advance much more than I had any absolute occasion for, by shewing that the transposition of these chapters would make a more easy connexion than the present.

In another place, you say, "The connexion" of chap. vii. 1, "is equally good, whether this verse follows ch. v. or ch. vi.;" † which makes nothing at all against me.

SECTION VI.

Of Journeys supposed to be omitted in my Harmony. ‡

ON the subject of this Section I have very little to add. Your Lordship will find that there is no journey that Jesus is ever said to have taken that I have not accounted for, and for which, I think, I have not allowed sufficient time.

The circuit mentioned *Matt.* ix. 35, and *Mark* vi. 6, in which our Lord visited *Nazareth*, and that mentioned by *Luke* (viii. 1), in which he crossed the sea of Galilee, [*ver.* 22,] &c. were certainly different; and yet I do not apprehend that by this means, as you say, I "multiply difficulties" § on myself, that I have not, in my own opinion, sufficiently cleared up.

If I have said, that "all our Lord's journeys to Jerusalem make no more than four," as you observe, || I must have overlooked one of the two passovers at the beginning or the

* "The hour will come, and is even now on the point of coming." *Reply*, p. 58.

† *Ibid.* p. 62. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 65—68.

§ *Ibid.* p. 67. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* p. 68. (P.)

end of the year. But this was an oversight that does not affect my hypothesis. I thank your Lordship for the notice of it, and I shall not fail to rectify it, if the work should be reprinted.

SECTION VII.

*Of the Number of Miles that Jesus has been supposed to travel per Day.**

I COMPLAINED of *unfairness* on this subject, because, after reciting the transactions which your Lordship says I comprise within the compass of fifty days, from the first passover to the following pentecost, you enumerate the journeys in that period; and in consequence of it, find that our Lord must have travelled at the rate of eight miles a day, including the sabbaths. What could be your Lordship's intention by this, but to represent *myself* as having made our Lord to travel at the rate of eight miles per day, for the space of fifty days together? For, certainly, you did not mean to represent him as having travelled at this rate on *your own* hypothesis; and I call the representation unfair, because *my* hypothesis does not suppose Jesus to have made all the journeys you mention, or to have extended them so far. But I am satisfied your Lordship did not advert to this circumstance, but only followed Mr. Whiston, who had treated Mr. Mann in the same manner, assuming his *time*, and including in it the *business* that *himself*, and not Mr. Mann, supposed to belong to it. To make the argument valid, it ought to have been in this form: "You suppose Jesus to have done this business in this time, and the time is not sufficient for it." As it now stands, it is, "I suppose our Lord to have done this business in the time that you mention, and the time is not sufficient, only because the business is more than *you* suppose to belong to it." When the argument is stated in this manner, it has certainly much less effect than Mr. Whiston meant it to have.

I do not see the force of what your Lordship observes in the last paragraph of this Section. I reject the journey to Jerusalem which you speak of, because I suppose it not to have been made. But I see no reason why you should charge me with the journey thither, and not with the journey back again. I *do* mention that journey in its due place

in my *calendar*, and allow, as I think, sufficient time for it.

Having nothing material to observe with respect to the *eighth* Section, I pass to

SECTION IX.

*Of the Argument for the probable Duration of our Saviour's Ministry, from the Object of it. **

ON the subject of this Section your Lordship says, "Nor can I persuade myself that our Lord had time enough, on your plan, to *dwell* in Chorasin and Bethsaida, as he did in Capernaum;" † and you refer to Matt. iv. 13. But in this place our Lord is only said to have dwelled "at Capernaum," and not at either of the other towns; nor do I recollect that this is so much as hinted at, or supposed, by any evangelist. That Jesus *visited* these two places is certain, and I suppose he did it on his first excursion from *Capernaum*.

Whether "our Lord's particular business" was "the delivering of moral instruction," ‡ or not, is perhaps a controversy about words. I own he omitted no proper opportunity of doing it; but I conceive the great object of his mission to have been to give proof of his being the *Messiah*, and an example of a resurrection from the dead in his own person. However, in a sufficiently proper sense of the words, I have no objection to saying, with your Lordship, that every thing that Jesus did was his proper business. All was of great use, and worked to the same end,

SECTION X.

Of the Transactions at the first Passover. §

YOUR Lordship is very large on the subject of this Section, especially on our Lord's having cleared the temple at this time, as well as at the last passover. But as this is of little consequence to my general hypothesis, and I do not think that you have invalidated what I before advanced on that subject, I shall not trouble your Lordship, or our readers, with many more remarks upon it. If our readers

* *Reply*, p. 76. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 78. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 79. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* pp. 81—163.

really think that you have answered my objections to the repetition of such a transaction as this, and which no evangelist says was repeated, I am satisfied. You grant, that notwithstanding the differences you had noted in the several accounts of this transaction, they "may be harmonized." * Our difference, therefore, on this subject, cannot be material.

You say, your "grand argument" is "the difference of time." † It is evident that in *John's* Gospel, as it now stands, the transaction is placed in a different time; but then I object to this arrangement, and think, partly from the nature of the transaction, and partly from its being placed differently by all the other evangelists, that it is misplaced here, not perhaps by *John* himself, (though this might have happened through inadvertence, being perhaps, composed after the rest of the Gospel was written,) but by some very early transcriber, or in whatever manner the fifth and sixth chapters of his Gospel came to be transposed. It may be impossible, in many cases, to determine *how* a thing was done, though there may be reason enough to think that it was done.

You say, "The silence of the three first evangelists on the early cleansing of the temple, may be accounted for by the just observation of the ancients, that they begin the acts of our Lord's public ministry after *John's* imprisonment." ‡ But then it is natural to ask, why did they choose to begin to relate the history of our Lord after the imprisonment of *John*, when so very remarkable and *public* a transaction as this preceded it? Besides, they all relate the history of *John's* preaching, and of Jesus being baptized by him. I therefore think it a strong argument against our Lord's cleansing the temple at this time, that the three first evangelists make no mention of it, the transaction being of so peculiarly striking a nature, and what must have been much more so at the opening of his ministry than at the close of it, where they have related it. In all cases it is more natural to relate any transaction the *first* time it happened, than the mere repetition of it afterwards.

I do not know that *John the Baptist* "ever expressly called" Jesus "the Messiah;" § but I own he said what amounted to it; as our Lord also sufficiently proved himself to be the *Messiah* without directly asserting it.

* *Reply*, p. 91. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 96. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 93. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 86. (P.)

SECTION XI.

*Of the Stay that Jesus made in Judea, after the first Passover.**

I AM content to make very little reply to what your Lordship has observed on the subject of this Section, thinking that what I have already advanced is sufficient for my purpose. You allow, that there was some difference in our Lord's manner of preaching "when he departed into Galilee, which precise period certainly constitutes," you say, "an æra in our Lord's manner of preaching." † And though I cannot account for our Lord's being said to *begin* to preach on his arrival in *Galilee*, if he had preached *much* and *publicly* before, (and none of the evangelists mention any particular instances of his preaching before,) I do not deny that, in some sense or other, he must have instructed at least those who applied to him for that purpose; so that *Nicodemus* could with propriety call him "a teacher." But his teaching must have been inconsiderable and private, to justify *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*, in passing it entirely over. And this is one reason why I think our Lord could not have made the *long stay* you suppose him to have made in *Judea* before his arrival in *Galilee*. I can, however, make a great allowance for his staying there, and making disciples too, if (which is very consistent with my hypothesis) this preaching and making disciples began some time before the passover.

I admit your Lordship's remarks at the beginning of this Section to be very just, but words that have a relative meaning are applied with great latitude. Thus, when I said that the three first evangelists had omitted nothing that was *considerable* before their account of our Saviour's preaching in Galilee, I did not suppose that the testimony of *John*, and the other particulars which you mention, were in no sense of the word, *considerable*; for I think every particular in the Gospel history to be truly so; but that our Lord had done nothing that was so striking, or that excited so much attention, as what is related after his arrival in Galilee.

I also admit, with your Lordship, that what *John* says, (iv. 45,) proves that our Lord had reputation in Galilee before his journey thither; but it is expressly said to have been in consequence of what he had done "at the feast," in *Jerusa-*

* *Reply*, pp. 104—114.

† *Ibid.* p. 107. (P.)

lem, and therefore is very far from being any proof of his having done any thing very remarkable in *Judea afterwards*, which is the only question between us. And it is evident, from the accounts of all the evangelists, that the notice our Lord attracted afterwards, was unspeakably greater than what he had excited before.

SECTION XII.

*Of the Journey from Judea to Galilee.**

I THINK it needless to observe any thing with respect to the subject of this Section, except that, whether I justly infer from *Luke* xiii. 33, that "the distance from Jerusalem to Galilee, was a journey of three days" † (which I still think to be the most natural interpretation) or not, the distance itself, which was only about sixty miles, does not admit of its having been more, to persons who professedly undertook a journey, even on foot; and as our Lord set out from the neighbourhood of *Jordan*, and near to *Samaria*, he can hardly be supposed to have required so much time.

As the preaching of Jesus is expressly said to have *begun* after his arrival at *Capernaum*, I think it is not probable that he had preached much on his road thither, at least so much as could have protracted his journey any considerable time. Besides, I allow *six days* from his leaving Judea to his arrival at Capernaum; which, considering the little that we certainly know to have passed on the road, is abundantly sufficient for the purpose.

I do, indeed, suppose, that our Lord preached on his journey to the neighbourhood of *Tyre*, though nothing be said of it in the Gospel history. But then it should be considered, that it does not appear that he visited that country more than once; whereas he passed from *Galilee* to *Judea*, and back again, several times during the course of his ministry. As the great opening of the Gospel appears to have been made after this arrival in Galilee, it is the less probable that he preached in his way thither at this particular time.

* *Reply*, pp. 115—119.

† *Ibid.* p. 115. See *supra*, p. 185. "The word *walk*," says the Bishop, "may and ought to be understood metaphorically: '*Ambulare hic est operari*,' says *Grotius*; '*Vox ambulare idem hic valet quod operari*, quo sensu frequentissime vox *ambulans* accipitur,' says *Wolzenogen*, and refers to *John* xii. 35, viii. 12; *Rom.* viii. 4. Add *John* vii. 1; *Luke* i. 6. '*Nominat perendinum, seu tertium diem*,' says the same critic, very justly, '*quia more Hebraico dixerat hodie et cras. Hoc enim sibi vult, se adhuc ad tempus operaturum.*' Whitty favours your interpretation: but the judicious reader must determine." *Reply*, pp. 117, 118.

SECTION XIII.

*Whether Jesus visited Nazareth or Capernaum first.**

As a proof that our Lord visited *Nazareth* before his arrival at *Capernaum*, your Lordship urges several circumstances mentioned by *Luke*, that are not noticed by the other evangelists, as his reading in the prophet *Isaiah*, &c. ; but these are only *additional articles*, and not such *variations* as prove the visits to have been different ; and I own that *Luke's* account of the transaction is by much the most circumstantial.

The argument on which your Lordship now lays the chief stress, is, that the visit to *Nazareth*, related by *Luke*, is followed by the same circumstances with respect to his arrival at *Capernaum*, with those related by *Matthew* and *Mark*, as his calling of *Peter*, &c.†

I answer, that *Matthew* gives no account of any rejection of our Lord at *Nazareth*, at the time that he is said to have *left Nazareth to go to Capernaum* ; and as he certainly preached at the time of his rejection there, and even publicly in the synagogue, and with such very remarkable consequences, he would hardly have said, in his account of his arrival at *Capernaum*, only four verses afterwards, “ From that time Jesus began to preach.” And *Mark* makes no mention at all of any arrival at *Nazareth* before he came to *Capernaum*.

Besides, had our Lord been rejected twice at the same place, the thing was so very extraordinary, that it would hardly have passed unnoticed by the evangelists. We might at least, expect some allusion to the first rejection, in account of the second. Such conduct of our Lord also seem to have been contrary to the instructions he gave to his apostles on their mission, (*Matt. x. 14.*) “ ever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, ye shall depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet ;” which seems to imply, that they were not to persist to them any more.

What you call “ our Lord's second visit to *Nazareth*,” mentioned by “ *Matthew* and *Mark*,”‡ is certainly in a more advanced period of our Lord's ministry ;

* *Reply*, pp. 119—133.† *Ibid.* pp. 124—127.‡ *Ibid.*

does not therefore follow that there had been any preceding visit, and, therefore, that there were "two visits to Nazareth, and two rejections there;"* but only that Luke places the same rejection in one part of the history, and Matthew and Mark in another; and to the testimony of these two, I cannot help giving a decided preference. Besides, that this visit was, in fact, in a more advanced period of our Lord's ministry than where *Luke* places it, I think his own account affords a sufficient intimation, when he represents the Jews as saying (iv. 23) to him at that time, "Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country." That all this should refer to a single miracle, wrought at *Capernaum*, before our Lord himself had been there, I still think very improbable.

SECTION XIV.

Of the Harmony of the Gospels according to the Ancients, † &c.

ON this I think it unnecessary to trouble our readers with any particular remarks; only wishing, as well as your Lordship, that our readers would apply your quotation from *Lardner* ‡ to my own attempt, as well as to your Lordship's. "I desire that the reader will particularly apply it to my own attempt, lest, in any place, I should have lessened the propriety or beauty of our Lord's actions or discourses by a wrong arrangement, or should have led the theological student to a misconception of the length or progress of our Lord's ministry. Speaking of Tatian's mistakes, he, Dr. Lardner, says, there is a respect due to the first attempts in any part of knowledge. Nor are modern harmonists free from prejudged opinions; and I am apprehensive that most of their harmonies likewise have need to be read with indulgence and caution, as well as those of the ancients."§

I would observe, however, that, in speaking of *Epipha-*

* *Reply*, p. 129. (*P.*)

† "Especially Eusebius and Epiphanius, and some of the moderns who have most nearly followed them." *Ibid.* pp. 134—140. The Bishop says, "Augustin's four books on the Consent of the Gospels should be added to the ancient writers mentioned by you; and in the Prefaces to Chemnitius's and Pilkington's Harmonies may be found a good general history of Harmonizers." *Ibid.* p. 134.

‡ "The sober and learned critic," adds the Bishop, "to whom we are both so much indebted in this debate." *Ibid.* p. 139.

§ *Ibid.* pp. 139, 140. (*P.*) See Lardner's *Works*, II. p. 424.

nius's notion of our Lord's preaching one year without opposition, and another in which he suffered much from their vexation and envy, you say, "Hence we learn—how uncertain *tradition* is in these matters, and how little attention is due to the sentiments of the early Christian writers on this subject."* But *Epiphanius*, who lived in the year 400, was far from being an *early* writer. In his time, *tradition* was altogether silent, and fanciful *speculation* had taken place of it. This is now to be corrected by sober criticism.

SECTION XV.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.†

I. *Of the first Excursion from Capernaum.‡*

I STILL think a week sufficient for every thing that is *recorded* of our Lord's first excursion from Capernaum; and all that your Lordship now urges against it are such *general expressions* as I had considered before. I own, however, that, were there not other substantial reasons which make me conclude that this excursion was a short one, the general expressions would have led me to imagine that it had been longer. But the argument from these expressions, though certainly in favour of your Lordship's hypothesis, is, I think, abundantly overbalanced by others which I have repeatedly urged.

II. *Of the second Sabbath after the first.§*

The reason why I took it for granted that Jesus was in *Galilee* at the time that the disciples plucked the ears of corn, is, that what is related by all the evangelists immediately before and after the transaction certainly passed in *Galilee*. I, therefore, think that an hypothesis which requires Jesus to have been in *Galilee* when it was hardly possible for him to have been there, and in general must have been absolutely impossible, on account of its nearness to the passover, cannot be the true one. This, therefore, I think an insurmountable difficulty with respect to your Lordship's interpretation of the word *δευτεροπρωτον*®. For my own part, I see so little reason for any of the interpreta-

* *Reply*, pp. 136, 137.

† *Ibid.* pp. 140—143.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 140—153.

§ *Ibid.* pp. 144—146.

tions that I have yet met with of that word, that I think other harmonizers would have done better if they had paid no attention at all to any supposed derivation of it.

THE CONCLUSION.*

IT is with the most amiable candour and frankness that your Lordship concludes with a sketch of the hypothesis of *two years and a half* for the duration of our Lord's ministry, and that you even mention some advantages of that scheme over your own. On this I would observe, that your distribution of our Lord's time, for the fifty days, between the first *passover* and the following *pentecost*, comprises all that is most difficult in my hypothesis; but that I think *Herod's* ignorance of Jesus is too long even upon this scheme. "Thus too," as you say, "Herod heard of Jesus's fame a year sooner than I have supposed, yet not till Jesus had preached and wrought miracles in Galilee for near twelve months."† This certainly makes the difficulty less than upon your Lordship's hypothesis, but still it is not, in my opinion, sufficiently within the bounds of probability.

I am happy that, in this letter, I have had no occasion to make use of any *general principles*, besides those in which we are both agreed. Speaking of the *greenness* of the grass mentioned by *Mark*, at the time that our Lord fed the five thousand, you say, "If you recur to the supposition that St. Mark was mistaken, you deny one of my first principles, and I cannot reason with you."‡ But I see no great difficulty in supposing there might be green grass in the neighbourhood of a fresh-water lake on the 13th of May, where I have placed this transaction, even in Judea.

I am sorry, however, that the admission of so trifling a mistake as this in an evangelical historian, who was no apostle, who says nothing about his *inspiration*, and whom we do not know to have been present, should affect any *first principle* with your Lordship; when I cannot help thinking that the supposition of so high a degree of inspiration, even with respect to the writings of the apostles themselves, is unfavourable to the proper evidence of Christianity, as I think I have shewn in the Preface to my

* *Reply*, pp. 147—153.

† *Ibid.* p. 150. (*P.*)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 52. (*P.*)

Harmony in Greek,* and also in my "Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion."†

But though we see this subject, and many others, in very different lights, I hope we shall always cultivate what is of more value than the possession of any *truth*, viz. a spirit of Christian *candour*; and that while we maintain what appears to us to be what Christianity really is, and with the earnestness that we conceive its importance authorizes, it will be with that respect for the prejudices of others which Christianity requires, and in such a manner, as that we shall not be ashamed if hereafter we should be found to have been in an error.‡

Upon the whole, I almost flatter myself, from your Lordship's most ingenuous disposition, which is apparent through the whole of this discussion, that when you consider the early prevalence of the opinion that our Lord's ministry did not much exceed one year; that this opinion was not that of the *learned* only, who might be misled by their speculations, but also of the *unlearned*, who had their information from uniform tradition; and the improbability of the interpretation of "the acceptable year" having been received so generally as it was, by many others besides the *Valentinians*, unless it had been countenanced by the received opinion on the subject, and indeed the impossibility of any interpretation of any text bearing down the *general belief* of an historical fact; when your Lordship shall consider how often it is asserted by the early Christian writers, that Christ was crucified when the *Gemini* were consuls, and that this was the very year after that in which he was baptized, viz. the fifteenth of *Tiberius*, reckoning, as all historians and chronologers, without the least exception, compute them, viz. from the death of *Augustus*; when you consider the improbability of three evangelists leaving no trace whatever of our Lord's ministry having extended beyond one year, and especially the conduct of *Luke*, in dating with so much exactness, the beginning of his history,

* *Supra*, pp. 8—15.

† Vol. II. pp. 208—211.

‡ The following concluding sentence of the Bishop's second *Reply*, dated *Waterford*, March 20, 1781, is in the same spirit, and may serve to illustrate, by contrast, the controversial style of *Horsley*, to whom were once ironically attributed "Sermons on Toleration, Humility, Charity, and Brotherly Love." See "Politics for the People," 1794, I. p. 128.

"Thus have I freely given you my sentiments on the subject of our amicable debate: I have endeavoured to deliver them with the respect due to your eminence as a scholar, and with the good manners and good-will which we owe to each other as gentlemen, and as Christians." *Reply*, p. 153.

and yet unavoidably leading his readers into a mistake of more than two years with respect to the conclusion of it; when you shall consider again the strange mistake not of *Herod* only, (who, however, it is almost certain, was not out of his own dominions at the time, and they were no larger than one of our counties,) but of many other Jews, even so late as the transfiguration, who thought that Jesus might be John risen from the dead, two years after they had both preached in public together: when, besides this, you consider with how much ease the whole business of the Gospel history is comprised within one year, as appears by my *Calendar*; how little it was that our Lord had to do himself, and how much remained for the apostles to do afterwards, you will be satisfied that more time than I allow would only embarrass and perplex the scheme.

Had unbelievers read the Scriptures with so much attention as to have discovered the objections that I have urged to the received hypothesis, I cannot help thinking they would have represented the history as improbable in many respects.

When these considerations are weighed with the seriousness that they deserve, I think your Lordship will not make the difficulty you have hitherto done of expunging a single word from a place, where many learned critics, who were by no means of my opinion on this subject, were convinced it had no business, and where I think I have almost demonstrated it was not to be found in the time of *Irenæus*; or of transposing a chapter to a situation in which it is hardly possible not to acknowledge it will make a better connexion than it does where it is now; and that you will not lay the great stress that you now do on general and indefinite expressions.

When your Lordship shall coolly consider all these things, I can hardly help persuading myself that, as we are not disputing for *victory*, but merely discussing a question of criticism for the sake of finding the *truth*, you will accede to my opinion, as it appears to me that there is so manifest a preponderancy of argument in favour of it. When I interrogate myself on the subject, I hope I can say with truth, that if your Lordship's arguments had made any impression on me, I should have acknowledged it. I have, on several occasions, avowed a change of opinion both in philosophical and theological subjects; and I think it would have been with real pleasure that I should have owned myself convinced by your Lordship, with respect to this business.

No person, however, can be quite sure of himself, but in the very same circumstances in which he has been tried before; and there are cases in which the strongest arguments and the greatest minds yield to the force of mere prejudice; so little, alas! are we, who boast of a rational nature, uniformly influenced by pure reason.

I think I have now noted every thing in your Lordship's Reply that seemed to require it; and, willingly submitting the whole to the candour of your Lordship and of the public, I remain, with the greatest respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient, humble servant,

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY.*

Birmingham, August 10, 1781.

* As it may give some satisfaction to our readers to be informed how this amicable controversy terminated, I have his Lordship's leave to publish part of a letter, with which he favoured me, after the receipt of my *third letter*, though it was not written with a view to publication:

"REV. SIR,

Dublin, April 19, 1782.

"I read your third letter on the duration of Christ's ministry, with the attention to which every thing that comes from you is entitled; and I endeavoured to read it as dispassionately as if it had not been addressed to me. As I had only a few remarks to make on incidental matter, and nothing new to advance on the main argument, I did not think it necessary to make a public reply. The subject is fairly before such readers as choose to consider it.

"I thank you for your observations in the eleventh page of that letter. [*Supra*, p. 207.] Frequent pretenders to miraculous powers did not arise till about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. I find no instance of what I have hastily asserted, but that Theudas, mentioned Acts v. 36, promised to divide the river Jordan.

"The transpositions which most favour one part of your hypothesis, are, I think, to be found in the Greek version of Jeremiah; in which the series of the chapters differs very remarkably from that of the Hebrew; and therefore shews that there has been great transposing, either in the translation or the original.

"I have some doubts whether the word *δευτεροπρωτοι*, Luke vi. 1, about which commentators so much perplex themselves, be a genuine reading. The text stands very well without it, and Wetstein quotes plausible authority for the omission of it, which is favoured by the parallel places."

An exhibition of so much true candour, is of unspeakably more value than the right decision of any controversy. Whatever our readers may think with respect to the merits of the question in debate, they must rise from their attention to it, with minds impressed in favour of that love of truth, and of that truly Christian temper, with which this controversy (on his Lordship's part at least) was begun, (by the remarks which his Lordship made, in his *Harmony of the Gospels*, on the duration which I assign to our Saviour's ministry,) has been conducted, and is now closed; though carried on by persons of very different religious persuasions. For my own part, I hope I shall not soon lose the favourable impression that it has made upon my mind. (P.) P. S. to the Third Letter.



LETTERS AND ADDRESSES

TO

The Jews.

1787 — 1799.

LETTERS TO THE JEWS,*

PART I.

INVITING THEM TO AN AMICABLE DISCUSSION

OF THE

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.



בית יעקב לבו ונלכה באור יהוה

Isaiah ii. 5.[*Birmingham*, 1787.]

LETTER I.

Of the peculiar Privileges of the Jewish Nation, and the Causes of their Prejudices against Christianity.

CHILDREN of the stock of *Abraham*, and heirs of the sure promises of God, hear, I intreat you, with the serious address of a Christian, who reverences your nation, is a believer in the future glory of it, and is a worshipper of the God of your fathers, without admitting any other to share in the rights of divinity with him.

I admire your persevering faith in the promises of God, notwithstanding the most discouraging appearances. In this

* These *Letters* are printed chiefly to be distributed among the Jews; and if there should appear to be any prospect of their answering the end for which they were composed, they will be translated into *Hebrew*, for the use of learned Jews in all parts of the world, to engage them, if possible, in an amicable discussion of the subject.

It may be proper to observe, that the word *Christ*, in this work, is used only as a proper name, to denote the founder of the Christian religion, and not as synonymous to *Messiah*, though it was originally nothing more than a translation of that word into *Greek*.

Since the first edition of these *Letters*, I have published *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever*, Part II., [Vol. IV. pp. 444—548,] in which I have stated the evidence of the Jewish and Christian religions jointly; and therefore I wish the Jews would give particular attention to them, and consider them as an appendage to these *Letters*, addressed to themselves. (P.) *Adet*. 1787.

you shew yourselves to be the worthy sons of the great patriarch from whom you are descended. You have suffered more than any other nation under heaven, but you justly believe it is no more than was foretold by your great prophet *Moses*, and what you have brought upon yourselves. And, believing in the equity of the Divine proceedings, and in the veracity of that God, who has distinguished you as *his peculiar people*, you cannot entertain a doubt, but that whenever the cause of his displeasure is removed, he will turn from his fierce anger, and remember the covenant which he made with your fathers, to be *a God to them, and to their seed after them*. He will “make a full end of all *other nations*, that shall persecute and oppress you, but *you* he will never utterly destroy. He will only “correct *you* in measure,” as we read, *Jer.* xxx. 11, xlv. 28.

Your dislike of *Christians*, and your abhorrence of their faith, is not to be wondered at, when it is considered how much you have suffered by their cruel oppressions, and how contrary their doctrines have been to the fundamental principles of your religion. You are the worshippers of the one living and true God. But, besides him, the generality of Christians have paid divine honours to Jesus Christ, and in a great measure also to those dead men whom they have called *saints*, who were no more the proper objects of worship than images of wood and stone, the work of men’s hands. But at this day the cruel usage you have met with from Christian nations is happily much abated. Christians in general, and especially the more civilized among them, are disposed to treat you with equity and humanity; and if you *now* make inquiry into their faith, you will find that many of them have rejected, as abuses and corruptions of it, those doctrines which you so justly abhor.

Jesus Christ, who was of your nation, was a worshipper of the same God with yourselves. He taught his followers to worship the same great Being, and no other, and to regard himself as their *master*, but as nothing more than the messenger and servant of God, a *prophet like unto Moses*; and the apostle *Peter* calls him (*Acts* ii. 22) “a man approved of God, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him.” This rational doctrine prevails more and more among Christians; and by reading the *New Testament* you will easily satisfy yourselves that there has been no more just reason why Christians should pay divine honours to Christ, than your ancestors had to worship *Moses*.

For many ages your fathers were continually relapsing into idolatry. But God, in the course of his providence, has at length entirely cured you of the least propensity to it. In like manner he thought proper to permit Christians to fall into similar idolatrous practices, but he is now opening their eyes, to shew them their abominations, and to bring them back to the worship of himself alone; that, with us, as well as with you, *God may be one*, “and his name one.” *Zech.* xiv. 9.

As I believe in the same God with yourselves, and worship and serve him only; so I, with some other Christians, believe in the perpetual obligation of all the laws which *Moses* prescribed to your nation; and that circumcision, and other customs derived from your ancestors, were intended to distinguish you from all other nations, as *the peculiar people of God*, to the end of the world.* Jesus Christ expressly said, (*Matt.* v. 17, 18,) that he came not “to destroy the law, or the prophets—but to fulfil” them; and that “till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.” The apostle Paul saith, (*Rom.* iii. 31,) that “through faith” in the Gospel, we do not “make void the law,” but *establish* it. Both Christ and his apostles, being *Jews*, strictly conformed to all the rites of your religion, and taught the same to all other Christian Jews, though they were not, authorized to enjoin the same observances on Christians of other nations. Had they done this, there would have been nothing to distinguish the posterity of *Abraham* from the rest of the world.

Since, therefore, well-informed Christians believe in the same one, living, and true God, with yourselves, it may be hoped that our mutual prejudices will in time abate, and that you will be prevailed upon to attend with calmness to the reasons that may be laid before you, why you should believe in the divine mission of *Christ*, as well as in that of *Moses*, and consider his religion as designed to be a blessing to the Gentile world as well as to you.

The same God is the benevolent Father of us all, and he has given us equal powers of serving him, and being happy in his favour. We are all equally the subjects of his moral government here, and are by nature equally capable of being heirs of immortality hereafter. Permit us, therefore, to claim the title of your brethren, while we acknowledge you

* See Vol. XII. pp. 442—482.

as *the elder branch* of the family, and do not envy you the pre-eminence that you are entitled to as such.

If you consider the tenor of all the promises of God to *Abraham* and your great ancestors, you will find that none of them respect the favour of God in a future world, but only *in this*. And though you have had peculiar advantages for knowing and serving God; yet unless these be properly improved, having more to answer for than other nations, you will certainly subject yourselves to a greater condemnation. As God has never spared your nation whenever you have sinned and revolted from him, but has always punished you, even with more severity than he has done other nations who were less favoured by him in this world, the same will, no doubt, be the case in the world to come. If the respect that God has for your ancestors will exempt you from punishment hereafter, it certainly would have done so here.

To you, as the posterity of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, God has promised the possession of the land of *Canaan*. But your greatest and most honourable distinction is, that, when all the rest of the world was fallen into idolatry, and the abominable and horrid vices connected with it, God instructed you in the true knowledge and pure worship of himself, so that by means of your nation, that most important doctrine of the *divine unity* has, together with the spirituality of his worship, been preserved in the world through all ages, even to this day.

You have been as "*the salt of the earth*," and by the knowledge which has been diffused from you to other nations, it has been preserved from universal corruption. From your nation God has made choice of his prophets, by whom he has revealed his will, not to yourselves only, but to all his offspring of mankind. By Jesus Christ and his apostles, who were all *Jews*, he has taught his will to the whole world, calling upon "all men every where to repent," (*Acts* xvii. 30,) not that they may share in your peculiar privileges and honours here, but that they may obtain immortal happiness, together with all the virtuous of your nation, hereafter.

At present your nation is under the cloud of the Divine displeasure, and therefore you have no prophets among you. But when you shall be obedient to God, and when, in consequence of it, he shall restore you to the possession of your own country, divine communications will be again

imparted to you, and by you to the rest of the world, as we read in *Isaiah* :

It shall come to pass in the latter days;
 The mountain of the house of Jehovah shall be established
 on the top of the mountains;
 And it shall be exalted above the hills:
 And all nations shall flow unto it.
 And many peoples shall go, and shall say;
 Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah;
 To the house of the God of Jacob:
 And he will teach us of his ways;
 And we will walk in his paths:
 For from Sion shall go forth the law;
 And the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.
 And he shall judge among the nations;
 And shall work conviction in many peoples:
 And they shall beat their swords into plough-shares,
 And their spears into pruning-hooks:
 Nation shall not lift up sword against nation;
 Neither shall they learn war any more.*

LETTER II.

Of the present dispersed and calamitous State of the Jewish Nation.

I REJOICE exceedingly in the prospect of the glorious times announced in the prophecy quoted in my last letter, times so glorious for you, and so happy for all the world; and I trust that God is now disposing things in the course of his providence, so as to hasten their approach. But assure yourselves that till some obstacle, now existing, be removed by yourselves, those times of honour and prosperity to your nation cannot come. The promises of God are sure. "He is—a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." *Deut.* xxxii. 4. And as surely as he threatened to expel you from the land of *Canaan* for your disobedience, and has executed his threatenings in the most dreadful manner, so surely will he fulfil his promise to restore you to it again, when you return to your obedience. But this is the indispensable condition of his favour. Attend to the word of God by Moses.

Deut. xxx. 1—6: "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind, among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and

* *Ch.* ii. 2—4. *Bp. Lowth.* See Vol. XII. pp. 413, 445, *Notes* *.

shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return, and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it, and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

Your present dispersed and calamitous situation is certainly a proof that you are *at this very time* under the Divine displeasure. Otherwise his hand would not be so heavy upon you. Examine, then, impartially what is the real cause of it, and make it your business to remove it. The chief cause of God's displeasure against you in former times, was your falling into idolatry: of this you were effectually cured by the *Babylonish Captivity*. * But another cause was the obstinacy and incredulity with which your ancestors were charged, when they were called *a stiffnecked and rebellious generation*, disobedient to the prophets whom God from time to time sent to them.

It is with reluctance that I bring these things to your remembrance, and only from a principle of sincere good-will to you. How many prophets of God were cruelly treated, and cut off, by your forefathers, as your scriptures testify! But their descendants repented of this, as we read in the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, where you have an excellent pattern of national humiliation for national sins, and an account of the return of God's favour in consequence of it.

Bear with me, I intreat you, if, on this occasion, I remind you of a serious warning given you by Christ, which at the same time shews his prophetic spirit, and the true case of your present sufferings. It was delivered in your temple, a few days before his death; *Matt. xxi. 33—41*: "There was a certain housholder, who planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew

* Yet see Dodson's *Isaiah*, pp. 156—161.

near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They" (that is, your *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, before whom he delivered this remarkable parable) "say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons."—Our Saviour afterwards added, (*ver.* 43,) "Therefore the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Has not this prophecy been as awfully fulfilled as that of *Moses*?

The continuance of your calamities shews that the cause of the Divine displeasure against you is not only something wrong done by your ancestors, but also something that is approved, and persisted in, by yourselves: and it is not for immoralities of a common kind that God punishes you with so much severity. For other nations have been, in these respects, as wicked as you; but no nation ever suffered as you have done.

It is in vain to allege that you are now suffering for all the sins of your ancestors from the beginning of your nation, and even for that of the golden calf. God expressly says, (*Exod.* xx. 5,) that he visiteth "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third or fourth generation" only; whereas many generations have passed since you have been wholly expelled from the land of *Canaan*. Besides, you were punished for all your sins prior to the *Babylonish* Captivity, by that captivity. Your restoration to your country is a proof of that; and God would not punish you again, and at the distance of so many ages, and with so much more severity, for the same offences.

Consider also, that a captivity of seventy years only, without any peculiar hardships during the continuance of it, was deemed a sufficient punishment for all your offences committed before that period; whereas you have experienced unspeakably greater calamities, and of much longer

continuance, since the promulgation of Christianity, than the amount of all your sufferings previous to it. Besides, you have sufficiently repented of your ill-usage of all the preceding prophets, and nothing more is requisite to obtain the Divine forgiveness, and the return of his favour.

Be not, therefore, offended, if, with great sincerity, but with equal affection, I must observe, that according to appearances, there is no other cause of God's displeasure against you besides your rejection and persecution of the prophets of your own nation, Christ and the apostles, who were sent to *you* in the first place, and who confined their instructions to your nation, till, being rejected by you, they were directed to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. This circumstance contributed to inflame the hatred of your ancestors against the preachers of the Gospel, and against the Gospel itself; and the same spirit (so hostile to the Gospel, and to God, if he be the author of it, and which must necessarily have excited his displeasure against you) has actuated your nation, in a greater or less degree, in all ages, even to this day. But when, duly humbled and instructed by your afflictions, you shall be more disposed to hear and attend to the voice of God speaking to you by his servants, so that some of you, at least, shall shew a better disposition towards Christianity, (which does not at all interfere with your attachment to the laws of *Moses*,) he may have mercy upon you; and your complete conversion may, perhaps, be reserved till your return to the land of *Canaan*. For the sake of a *righteous few*, God may have compassion on *the many*. But *he* only knows what his own secret purposes are. Of this we may be satisfied, that *the Judge of all the earth will do that which is right*," (*Gen. xviii. 25*,) and least of all will he be unjust to the descendants of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*.

LETTER III.

Of the historical Evidences of the Divine Mission of Christ.

REVIEW, I intreat you, the history of the times in which the Gospel was published, and the conduct of your ancestors in them; and you will find that they rejected those who came to them from God, bringing the same testimonials of a divine mission that *Moses* and the preceding prophets had brought before them. For, like them, they also did

what no men could have done, if God had not been with them. They healed all diseases by speaking a word, they even raised the dead, and Christ himself rose from the dead after he had been publicly crucified.

As a true prophet, Christ foretold the dreadful calamities which befel your nation in that generation, and with the truest sympathy he even shed tears on the prospect of them. Thus we read in one of our Gospels, written before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus: *Luke* xix. 41—44: “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”

That Christ performed miracles, your ancestors, who saw them, did not deny; but they weakly ascribed some of the most remarkable of them to the aid of Beelzebub; and it has since been said by your writers, that he performed his miracles by means of some ineffable name of God, which he stole out of the temple.

I will not affront your understandings so much as to refute such pretences as these. If God could permit Christ to impose upon your nation, and the world, in this manner, he might have suffered Moses to do the same, and there could be no guard against the grossest impostures. Assure yourselves, therefore, that God, the God of your fathers, could never suffer your nation to be deceived in this manner. The powers of nature will never be controuled but by the God of nature, and by persons actually commissioned and impowered by him.

Think not that I wish to undervalue the evidence for the divine mission of *Moses*. I give as firm an assent to it as any of yourselves can do. The history of *Moses* is most essentially different from the fabulous histories of *Greece* and *Rome*; his history having been written in the age in which he lived, and the history of your nation having been continued without interruption from that time to what is universally allowed to be the time of certain history, and in such a manner as that the connexion gives the highest credibility to the whole.

Such a history as yours could never have been *received* as true, in the age of Moses itself, and in all following ages, if it had not been so. Your nation, which by its long continuance in *Egypt* had acquired a fondness for its superstitions, was exceedingly averse to the laws and constitutions of Moses, and therefore would never have been brought to submit to them, if they had not been persuaded, by evidence in which they could not be deceived, that they were prescribed by God.

The evidence for the divine mission of Moses was, I say, of such a nature, as that it was impossible that your ancestors should have been imposed upon with respect to it. The miracles were not things done in the presence of a few interested witnesses, but in that of both *Egyptians* and *Israelites*. Your whole nation walked on dry land through the *Red Sea*, and through the channel of the river *Jordan*. They all heard the voice of God speaking to them distinctly (not a single articulate word only, but all the Ten Commandments) from Mount *Sinai*, and they were fed with manna from heaven forty years. In things of this public nature no people could be imposed upon.

It is not, indeed, possible to account for your ancestors (who were not in other respects more knowing than the rest of the world, and who were inferior in science to the *Egyptians* and *Babylonians*) having a more perfect knowledge of God, and a purer method of worship than other nations had, but on the supposition of their having been favoured with such divine communications as your history gives an account of. Where but in your scriptures, in all the periods of antiquity, and in the most polished nations, shall we find such compositions as those which are contained in your book of *Psalms*? It is in vain that we look for such sentiments of reverence for the universal providence and righteous government of one living and true God in any hymns composed by writers of other nations. A religion so authenticated as yours, is certainly entitled to your most zealous attachment.

But it is not sufficient to obey *one* messenger of God only, and disregard others who come with the same commission. The reverence which your ancestors had for *Moses* did not excuse them when they rejected *Elijah*, *Jeremiah*, and others whom God sent. If, therefore, *John the Baptist* and *Jesus Christ*, were actually sent to you with a commission from God; if they and the apostles were really *prophets*, your adherence to Moses and the other prophets will not excuse

your rejection of them. For it is a rejection of the authority of God, by whom they were sent.

Now, without any disparagement to the evidence for the divine mission of Moses, that of Christ may be shewn to be even clearer and stronger, at least to us at this day ; because the history of his miracles is more within the limits of certain history.

Are the books of Moses genuine, the real production of the age in which the events recorded in them are said to have taken place? So are our four *Gospels*, and the book of *Acts*. For they, also, may be traced up to the time in which the events recorded in them happened ; so that they could never have been received as they were, if it had not been well known that the particulars contained in them were true.

Were your forefathers so disposed that they would not have submitted to the institutions of Moses, without the most satisfactory evidence that they were prescribed to them by God? The apostles also, and thousands of your countrymen, in the age of Christ, were no less averse to receive such doctrines as those which he taught them. Would they have received such a person as Jesus, a crucified malefactor, a dead man, for their Messiah, if the clear evidence of the miracles wrought by him in his life-time, and especially that of his resurrection from the dead, had not compelled them to it? They were no less attached to the opinion of the *Messiah* being a great prince and a conqueror than you are at this day. But being men of ingenuous minds, they not only abandoned that favourite doctrine, but every thing dear to them in the world, and even life itself, for the sake of truth and a good conscience.

If you examine the particulars of the miracles of Christ, you will find that, though none of them can be said to vie with some of those recorded by Moses in point of *splendour* and *magnitude* ; yet, that with respect to *notoriety* and *frequency*, they were abundantly sufficient to shew, that there could be no trick or collusion in the case ; and most of them were such as also mark the great benevolence of his character. He healed the sick ; and not one or two only, but, during a great part of his public ministry, he went about healing all that were brought to him, and especially diseases of the most obstinate kinds, which seldom yield to any medical treatment, and such as, if ever they be cured, it is only in a long course of time, as palsies, leprosies, lunacies, and cases of blindness. He raised no less than

three persons from the dead, and two of them in the presence of a great number of persons, his enemies as well as his friends.

A miracle something similar to that of your forefathers being fed with manna, was his feeding first five thousand, and afterwards four thousand men, besides women and children, with a small quantity of provision. With respect to a mere command of the powers of nature, what could shew it more than his stilling a tempest, or his walking on the sea, in which there could be no artifice by which the spectators could be imposed upon? And though after his resurrection, he did not appear to all the people, he was repeatedly seen and examined by numbers of those who were best acquainted with him, and at one time by more than five hundred persons at once. At first his disciples had no expectation of ever seeing him again, and therefore could not have been pre-disposed to believe the fact; and afterwards they had leisure to converse with him, and examine him as particularly as they pleased; and in the presence of a great number of them he ascended into heaven. After this he appeared to one of the most inveterate enemies of his religion, *Saul of Tarsus*, who, being thereby convinced of the truth of Christianity, became a zealous preacher of it. Read the history, and you must perceive that it bears, in all respects, as evident marks of truth as that of *Moses*.

The obstinacy and incredulity of your nation in general, in the time of our Saviour and the apostles, may be satisfactorily accounted for on the principles of human nature, over which, motives of interest, ambition, and revenge, have often more influence than all other considerations. How often did the great body of your nation revolt from their allegiance to God, notwithstanding the clear and frequent proofs of his interposition! Within a very few days after the most express command, given from the mouth of God himself, in an audible voice from Mount *Sinai*, forbidding them to make any graven image, they made a golden calf, and bowed down before it.

Is it then any thing very extraordinary, that, chagrined as your ancestors were, disappointed in the humble appearance of Jesus, and stung by his severe, though just reproofs of their hypocrisy and other vices, they were so far from hearkening to him, that they apprehended him, and put him to death: and that they persisted in wreaking their vengeance on his followers? It is but too natural for interested, ambitious, and irritated men, to act as they did. But that

Jesus, who was so unlike what was expected of the *Messiah*, should have been received in that character by such numbers of your countrymen, cannot be accounted for but on the supposition that they had received the fullest satisfaction that his claim was well founded.

It is, indeed, hardly possible to account for the very *pretensions* of Jesus himself, on any principles but the fullest conviction in his own mind, that God had sent him. He was a man of virtue and integrity, if ever there was one; and, as appears by his whole history, he was no wild enthusiast, but of a very cool and temperate mind. Being a Jew as well as yourselves, he would naturally have the same notion of the Messiah that other Jews of his age had, and which you retain to this day. What then could have given him an idea of a *spiritual*, instead of a *temporal kingdom*? And what could have supported him under the terror of a violent death, to which he voluntarily surrendered himself, and which in his coolest moments he frequently expressed his deliberate intention of doing, in full confidence of being soon raised to life again, but the firmest persuasion that God was with him, and would carry him through his arduous undertaking?

Had Jesus been an impostor, like others by whom you have been imposed upon since, he would certainly have availed himself of the popular prejudices, instead of opposing them. He would have courted the leading men of his country, and not have irritated them against him; or at least would have secured a sufficient number of partisans among the common people; and at several periods of his history, and especially in the week in which he was crucified, they were much disposed in his favour. But he always himself opposed every attempt to make him a king.

If he had not been a good man, as well as fully persuaded of his divine mission, he would naturally have assumed the title and rank of a *king*, in order to gain followers; and having no expectation of a spiritual kingdom, or of any reward, in another life, he would never have been so foolish, or so mad, as to have submitted to die, when it was in his power to make his escape. For when those who were sent to apprehend him were struck with awe, and *fell backward to the ground*, (*John* xviii. 6,) he encouraged them, and voluntarily went with them, though he knew it was to certain death.

Had the scheme been that of the apostles, after the death of Christ, (as the object of it must have been their own emo-

lument or honour,) they certainly made a very unnatural choice of a head, to whom all the honour was given; a man whose influence, whatever it was, must have expired with him, and whose name, as that of a crucified malefactor, could have been no credit to them. Besides, it is highly improbable that they, whose ambition led them to dispute, as we find they did, about precedency while their master was living, should live in the most perfect harmony, and jointly carry on the same scheme, after his death, with no bond of truth and integrity to keep them together.

Consider, then, I beseech you, the history of *Christ*, which is as authentic as that of *Moses*, or that of any of your prophets. The transactions of it, and of the period which followed it, were "things not done in a corner." (*Acts* xxvi. 26.) And consider whether, as men of reason and understanding, you can account for the reception of Christianity in so great a part of the world, and especially by so many of your countrymen, and for its continuing to gain ground, and establish itself, notwithstanding the most violent opposition, both from the heads of your nation, and all the other powers of the world, on any other supposition than that of its having come from God.

Jesus Christ was not such a man as *Mahomet*, who pretended to no miracle besides the composition of the *Koran*, (which it certainly does not exceed the capacity of man to write,) and who propagated his religion by the sword. Christ and the apostles appealed to miracles of the most public nature, and had no means of propagating their religion but the evidence of its truth.

I have carefully perused the most celebrated of your writers against Christianity, and I do not find in any of them a due examination of the *historical evidence* for it. They have contented themselves with saying in general, that Christianity was received by very few of your countrymen, and those the lowest of the people; and that even among the Gentiles, the professors of it were not numerous before it was established by the power of Constantine.

Now a slight acquaintance with history would convince you that this was far from being the truth of the case. The history of the book of *Acts* (the authority of which was never disputed, any more than that of the books of *Moses*) shews that there were many thousands of Christian Jews in Jerusalem itself, presently after the death and resurrection of Christ, and many of them of considerable rank. And, according to other, the most authentic, accounts, there

appears to have been a large body of Jewish Christians, (generally called *Ebionites*,) residing chiefly in *Syria*, whither they had retired upon the approach of the Jewish war; and there were even several considerable writers among them. Of these I shall only mention *Hegesippus*, who wrote the history of the Christian Church, in continuation of the book of Acts; and *Symmachus*, who, besides translating the *Old Testament* into *Greek*, wrote a Commentary on the Gospel of *Matthew*, in which he undertook to refute the story of the miraculous conception. They were also learned Jewish Christians of whom *Jerome* learned the Hebrew tongue.

As to the Christian *Gentiles*, it is well known that they were exceedingly numerous in all parts of the *Roman* empire; that they did not in general consist of the lowest of the people, but had among them many persons of wealth, rank, and character, and that they endured several severe persecutions before the time of *Constantine*. Besides, how could this emperor, in a period which was full of civil dissension, and who, having had many competitors to contend with, must have had many more to fear, have safely changed the public religion of the *Roman* empire, if the minds of the people had not been well prepared for it, by their general profession, or at least good opinion, of Christianity?

Now what we maintain is, that this state of things (which no person acquainted with history can deny) could not have taken place without such evidence of the miracles and resurrection of Christ, as it was not in the power of those who had the best opportunity of inquiring into it, to resist.

In order to form a right judgment with respect to those facts on which the truth of Christianity depends, permit me to observe, that you must not (as too many of you, I perceive, do) confine yourselves to the reading of books written by your countrymen, but give due attention to Greek and Roman literature; by which only you can form a just idea of the state of things in the times in which Christianity was promulgated. It is well known that there are no Hebrew writings of that period now extant. But other nations have had writers and historians, as well as yours; and they are entitled to credit in proportion to the marks of *good information* and of *veracity* which they bear. Read, then, with attention the writings of the age in which Christianity was promulgated, and any others that are able to throw light upon it, and consider who they were that *received* Christianity, and who they were that *rejected* it. This, I am persuaded,

will satisfy you, that the work was of God, and therefore that it was in vain that the rulers of your nation, and of the world, opposed it.

LETTER IV.

Of the Doctrine concerning the Messiah.

YOU say that whatever miracles might have been wrought by Christ and his apostles, he could not be your *Messiah*, because he did not bear the proper characters of the *Messiah*, as they are laid down in the prophets. But I earnestly beg that you would re-consider those prophecies, and what is really said of the person who is distinguished by the title of *the Messiah*, or the anointed messenger of God. That particular title is not used (except by *Isaiah*, [xliv. 23, xlv. 1,] who gives it to *Cyrus*) by any of your prophets before *Daniel*, who applies it to a person who was to be *cut off*, and who assigns a term for that event, which must have been elapsed many centuries ago. (*Dan.* ix. 24.) For *seventy weeks*, (or a period consisting of as many years as seventy weeks contain days,) from *the command to rebuild Jerusalem*, which was then in ruins, must, on any computation, have expired about the time of Christ.

Your *Rabbi Isaac*, in his celebrated treatise entitled the *Bulwark of the Faith*, * says, that the seventy weeks of *Daniel* are a period of four hundred and ninety years, to be reckoned from the word of God to *Jeremiah* concerning the return from the *Babylonish Captivity*, or from the destruction of the temple by *Nebuchadnezzar*, to its destruction by *Titus*. He also says, that *Messiah, the prince*, in the former part of the prophecy means *Cyrus*, who is called the *Messiah*, or *the anointed*, by *Isaiah*; and that by the *Messiah* who is to "be cut off," in the latter part of the prophecy, is meant the last king of the Jews, or *Agrippa the younger*, who is said by a spurious *Josephus* (never quoted by any writer before the twelfth century) to have been killed by *Vespasian* before the taking of the city.

But, to mention no more objections to this hypothesis, from the destruction of the temple by *Nebuchadnezzar* to that by *Titus* was a period of more than six hundred and fifty years; and king *Agrippa* was not cut off at all, but probably

* Section xlii. (P.)

ended his days peaceably at Rome, as may be collected from the best accounts of him. Besides, the *Messiah* mentioned in the two parts of the same prophecy, is, no doubt the same person, whoever he was; and if this be not your *proper Messiah*, where do you find him announced at all, *by name*, in any prophecy whatever?

On the other hand, *Orobio*, in his disputation with *Limborch*, * maintained that the *Messiah* of *Daniel* was the first high-priest, who lived together with, and after *Nehemiah*. But it is not at all necessary to shew how ill this idea corresponds to the language of the prophecy.

The mistake which, for wise purposes, God has suffered you to fall into, has arisen from your not having distinguished between this *suffering Messiah*, and that *prince of the house of David*, † under whom you are to enjoy the great prosperity that is promised to you *in the latter days*. All the temporal glory that you expect, will certainly be your lot; and the *Messiah* that you look for will come. For it is not the *name*, but the *character* that is to be regarded. But if you admit the *divine mission* of Jesus, you cannot object to his claim of being that suffering *Messiah* announced by the prophets.

Your future glory is distinctly foretold by many of the prophets. It is even the great burden of prophecy from *Abraham* to *Zechariah*. But it must come in its proper time. And while you continue obstinately to resist God, in rejecting those whom he sent unto you, and cherish a temper of mind so utterly unworthy of the high rank that is destined for you, I do not see how it can be consistent with the prophecies that you should be in any other state than that most unhappy one in which you now are.

You expect that your *Messiah* will be lineally descended from *David*, and therefore you cannot be reconciled to the idea of Jesus being that Messiah, because Christians say that he had no human father; so that according to your rules of genealogy, he could not be said to be *the son of David*. But it is no where said that the person who is characterized by the title of *Messiah*, should be descended from David, but only that *prince* under whom you are to enjoy your temporal prosperity.

However, the history of the miraculous conception of Jesus does not appear to me to be sufficiently authenticated.

* See "De Veritate Religionis Christianæ, amica Collatio cum erudito Judæo," 1687.

† See Vol. XII. pp. 411—442.

The evidence of it is by no means the same with that of his public life, his miracles, his death and resurrection, which are all that the truth of Christianity requires, (and of which there were many witnesses,) and the original Gospel of *Matthew*, received by your countrymen, did not contain it.

Your sacred books, as well as ours, being written by *men*, neither of them can be expected to be entirely free from mistakes, or exempt from interpolations. Yours, as you must acknowledge, have, in a course of time, suffered in these respects. But it is sufficient for us both, that the great events, on which every thing that is of importance to our religion depends, are true. As to any thing that is not necessarily connected with such events, and therefore is not supported by their evidence, we should think ourselves at liberty to receive or reject it, according to its *separate evidence*. Myself, and many other Christians, are no believers in the miraculous conception of Jesus, but are of opinion, that he was the legitimate son of *Joseph*, who was of the family of *David*; and such seems to have been the opinion of the great body of Jewish Christians, who had more opportunity of informing themselves concerning the fact than the Gentiles had. But we are not less firm believers in all the public transactions of the life of Jesus, in his miracles, his death, and his resurrection; and consequently, in his divine mission. With respect to his supposed miraculous conception, and other articles relating to Christianity, but not essential to it, do you examine and judge for yourselves.

LETTER V.

Miscellaneous Observations, and Conclusion.

SOME of you may perhaps say, that you cannot enter into any discussion concerning the evidence of Christianity, till the different professors of it shall agree among themselves, and tell you what it really is. But this demand would be manifestly unreasonable; because it is very possible that Christianity may be true, though many persons should hold wrong opinions concerning it. You Jews hold very different opinions concerning many things relating to your law. But does this circumstance prove that it has no foundation in truth?

There is not, indeed, any subject of human speculation, with respect to which different men have not maintained different opinions. But would you think it wise in any

person to refuse to study the law, or medicine, or philosophy, till all the professors of these sciences were agreed about the principles of them?

Besides, all Christians are agreed with respect to the great articles of their faith. They all maintain that Jesus had a divine mission, evidenced by his miracles and resurrection; that he was the person announced by your prophets under the character of *the Messiah*; and that, though he is ascended to heaven, he will come again to raise the dead, and judge the world. Admit the truth of these articles only, and we shall readily acknowledge you to be Christians. As you acknowledge any man to be a believer in the religion of Moses, who admits *his* divine mission; nothing is requisite to denominate any person a Christian, but his believing the divine mission of Christ.

If it stagger you to think that Christianity should have been so corrupted, as it must have been if my ideas of it be just, I beg leave to refer you to my “History of the Corruptions of Christianity,” in which you will find the origin and progress of them, I flatter myself, satisfactorily accounted for, without implying any reflection on Christianity itself. And if you wish to have a more particular account of the origin of the doctrine of the *Trinity*, at which you are so justly scandalized, I refer you to my “History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ,” in which you will see a full account of the rise and progress of that doctrine, with all the changes it has undergone, from its source in the *Platonic* philosophy to the present day.

You may, however, say, that Christians are so much divided among themselves, that you do not know which denomination of them you can join. But the same may be said concerning your religion. For there are different sects among you, and you differ in the interpretation of your Scriptures as we do in that of ours.

Besides, there is no occasion for you *Jews* to connect yourselves with any class of Christians. On the contrary, since you are still to be distinguished as *Jews*, no less than as *Christians*, it will be more convenient for you to form a separate church, and to keep your sabbath as you now do. There are some Christians who observe the seventh day * as well as yourselves, and we consider this circumstance as making no schism in the Christian church. All the ancient

* See Vol. II. p. 323, *Note*.

Jewish Christians observed the seventh day for the purpose of public worship. *

It has pleased Divine Providence, for wise ends, no doubt, to permit both your religion and ours to be grossly corrupted. Many things have been added to your law entirely foreign to it; and this has also been the case with Christianity. To the simple doctrine of the Gospel have been added such opinions (borrowed from Heathen philosophy) as are utterly discordant with its genuine principles, especially that of the divinity of Christ; though the *New Testament* no more represents him as a God, than the *Old Testament* does Moses. But, as I have said, there are many Christians who hold that doctrine, and that of the *Trinity*, in as much abhorrence as you can do.

By all means read the *New Testament* for yourselves, and examine it with impartiality. It will be best understood by means of its connexion with the *Old*, as it consists of books written by your countrymen, to whom your scriptures, and the language in which they are written, were familiar; so that the phraseology is very much the same in both. You will find the historical books, which are those of the greatest importance, written with the same simplicity with those of the *Old Testament*, by men of the greatest integrity and piety, who, like your sacred writers, do not conceal their own faults, or those of their friends; and very far will you be from perceiving in them any marks of artifice, or of a design to impose upon their readers, if it had been in their power, which it evidently was not.

An impartial perusal of these books, with an allowance for such oversights as are incident to all writers, those of your scriptures not excepted, cannot but give you a favourable impression of the characters of Christ and the apostles, and dispose you to give more attention to the evidence of their mission from God. But, by all means, as becomes men of reason and religion, endeavour to divest yourselves of that extreme abhorrence with which you have generally regarded our religion, under the influence of which it will be impossible for you to form any right judgment. Such an extreme prejudice as many of you have shewn to the very name of *Christianity* must incapacitate persons for judging rightly concerning any subject whatever.

It is your belief, no less than it is mine, that God brings

* See Vol. II. pp. 322, 321

good out of all evil, and that he only permits the evil for the sake of the good that is connected with it. Even the general unbelief of your nation, which is so much to be lamented in some respects, has had its use with regard to the credibility of the Gospel history. Had the great body of your nation, and especially the rulers of it, in the time of Christ, or that of his apostles, embraced Christianity, as it was a religion which sprung up among yourselves, it would have been said, at this day, that it was a contrivance of those who had it in their power to impose upon the common people, and to make them believe whatever they pleased; and that your scriptures, which bear testimony to Christ, had been altered to favour the imposture. Whereas the violent opposition which your nation in general, and the rulers of it, made to Christianity, and which has continued to the present day, will for ever put it out of the power of unbelievers to say, that it was a scheme which the founders of it carried on in concert with any human powers. The work was not of man, but of God. It was founded on truth, and the gates of death cannot "prevail against it." *Matt.* xvi. 18.

But if your temporary unbelief has answered so valuable a purpose, a much greater, and a more happy one may be expected from your conversion to Christianity, at the present, or some future time; when with that will be connected your restoration to the Divine favour, your re-settlement in your own country, and that glorious and prosperous state in it which is certainly reserved for you. This will be such a fulfilment of a long train of prophecy, now existing in your sacred books and ours, and which, therefore, can never be said to have been made after the event, as must silence all incredulity, and establish the pure worship of the God of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, to the end of time.

Even the corruption of Christianity, and that degree of unbelief in it which has been the consequence of that corruption, will likewise appear, we cannot doubt, to have had its use, viz. to make us examine our principles, in order to distinguish what is *true* from what is *false*. By this means we shall be better acquainted with the real nature and value of Christianity, and yield a better grounded and more unwavering assent to it, than we could have done, if we had only received it from our ancestors without any examination of our own. It is a knowledge of the opposition that has been made to any system, and of the power of truth in overcoming that opposition, that can alone give a firm establishment to our faith in it.

We therefore owe infinite obligation to your nation for upbraiding us, as you have never ceased to do, with paying divine honours to Jesus Christ, and making a Trinity in the Divine nature, and consequently with being *idolaters*.

It has been one principal means of making the more inquisitive among us to consider whether the heinous charge was a just one; and the consequence has been, that we have found it to be so. You had reason on your side, and we yield to it. With the same candour, do you also examine whether we have not, in other respects, reason on our side also, and submit to *that*, not to *us*, who are only the means in the hand of Providence of holding it out to you.

If you will examine impartially what Christianity really is, and not what it has been *represented* to be, you will find in it nothing at which your minds ought to revolt. It is perfectly consistent with all the zeal you now have for the law of *Moses*, though it is hostile to the additions which the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* among you have made to it, and which no person, except one authorized by God for the purpose, had any right to make.

Christianity inculcates as fully as *Moses* himself, the doctrines of the *divine unity*, and that of his placability to returning penitents, and it asserts with peculiar clearness and energy that fundamental article of all practical religion, the revelation of a *future life*, rectifying some mistakes into which your ancestors seem to have fallen with respect to it. But, whether you be offended or not, Christianity opens the gates of heaven to all the Gentile world.

This doctrine, however, is by no means inconsistent with any thing contained in your Scriptures, but, on the contrary, is really implied in them. For there we read that *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Job*, and many others, enjoyed the favour of God, (and they will, no doubt, be happy in a future state,) though they lived before the publication of the law of *Moses*, or even the appointment of circumcision. It is evident, therefore, that these rites are not, in their own nature, necessary to acceptance with God. Nay, *Abraham* himself became the friend and favourite of God before he was circumcised: and neither he, nor *Isaac*, nor *Jacob*, were acquainted with the peculiar laws of *Moses*. Why, then, should you think it inconsistent with any maxim in the government of God, that he should be disposed to make all the sincerely pious and virtuous, happy?

Your peculiar ritual cannot, from the nature of it, be observed by all mankind. It is only adapted to a country of

small extent, but sufficient, and properly situated, to be the head of all countries, and where your nation will reign as “kings and priests unto God,” receiving the homage of all other nations, and presenting offerings to God on their behalf. If a situation like this does not gratify your highest ambition, you encourage an ambition of a very preposterous and improper kind, inconsistent with the happiness of all other nations, and indeed with that of your own. But can you really think that God made all the Gentile nations to be your slaves and vassals, and did not rather intend that your pre-eminence should have for its object, in the great plan of Providence, the happiness of the whole world?

The head, though the most honourable member of the body, is calculated to be subservient to the whole system. The family of Aaron supplies you with priests, but it is for the use of all the twelve tribes; and the family of David gives you kings, but for the happiness of the nation at large. In like manner, your whole nation is to be the head of all the nations of the earth, in order to its being the medium of communicating happiness to all mankind, who are equally the offspring of God and the care of his providence with yourselves. Let, then, this great, this rational and desirable pre-eminence content you, and let all idea of opposition and difference of interest cease. We will receive and honour you as our elder brethren, in the great family of God. Acknowledge us as your younger brethren.

Your nation is the great object towards which our eyes are directed. From the call of *Abraham*, you have been the chief instrument in the hands of God, of instructing mankind in the great truths of religion. Your sufferings have had the same object with your prosperity; and having now, we hope, nearly answered their end, may the God of heaven, the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, the God whom we Christians as well as you Jews worship, (and whom we have learned of you to worship,) be graciously pleased to put an end to them, gather you from among all nations, as he has promised, re-settle you in your own country, the land of *Canaan*, and, under princes of the family of *David*, make you the most illustrious, as you are now the most despised, of all the nations of the earth!

With my most earnest prayers for your happiness, temporal and spiritual,

I am,

Your brother in the worship of the one only true God,
JOSEPH PRIESTLEY.

P.S. I am far from flattering myself that the little which I have now advanced should, of itself, make any of you converts to Christianity. My utmost hope is, that it may be the means of drawing your attention to the subject, and especially to the study of your Scriptures and ours in conjunction; that you may judge for yourselves whether there be reason in what I have advanced, or not. Your conversion must be the result of your own diligent study and impartial inquiry, with the blessing of God. In order to contribute the little that may be in my power to so desirable an event, I shall be very happy to hear what any of your learned men may object to my state of the evidences of Christianity in this small tract; and I do assure you, that I will consider your objections with the greatest attention. Let us then freely confer and reason together on the subject; and if we should not entirely convince one another, we shall at least have an opportunity of shewing our candour and good-will.

You will please to take particular notice, that my chief object (besides shewing that the proper characters of the person who is distinguished in your prophecies by the title of *Messiah* apply to Jesus Christ, and to no other) is to convince you that the *proper*, that is, the *historical evidence* for the miracles of *Christ*, is of the very same kind with that to which you must have recourse, in order to prove the truth of those of *Moses*, and, upon the whole, more strong and satisfactory. If, therefore, it be in your power to persuade a Heathen, that God really spake to your ancestors by Moses; by the force of exactly similar arguments you ought to acknowledge that the same great Being spake by Christ and the apostles; and on whatever principles you reject the evidence of Christian miracles, any person will be justified in rejecting those on which the truth of your own religion rests.

Diligently, then, compare the historical evidence of the two religions. Both, you will find, are, in reality, but one. They are perfectly consistent with, nay, they imply each other, and must stand or fall together.

LETTERS TO THE JEWS.

PART II.

OCCASIONED BY MR. DAVID LEVI'S REPLY TO THE FORMER
LETTERS.

שובו אלי ואשובה אליכם אמר יהוה צבאות

Mal. iii. 7.

[*Birmingham*, 1787.]

LETTER I.

Of Mr. Levi's want of Candour, his Ignorance of profane Literature, and of the New Testament; and of his requiring Unanimity in the Opinions of Christians.

Brethren in the belief of the unity of God,

I AM happy to find that I have, in any measure, gained your attention to the *Letters* I took the liberty to address to you, inviting you to an amicable discussion of the evidences of Christianity, and that one of your body, Mr. David Levi,* has favoured me with an answer to them.† I should have been more happy if he had been better acquainted with profane literature, as it is commonly, though improperly called, and if he had shewn a little more candour.

According to him, I am not "entitled to the appellation of a Christian,"‡ and, "notwithstanding all my boasted

* "Author of *Lingua Sacra*; the Ceremonies of the Jews, &c."

† In "Letters to Dr. Priestley." This publication, according to Mr. Levi, greatly alarmed the Jews; "for, having long felt the iron hand of persecution," he adds, "for the most frivolous and groundless accusations, they consequently dreaded the most distant attempt at what might, by malevolent persons, be construed an attack upon the established religion." See "Letters to Dr. Priestley, in Answer to his Letters to the Jews, Part II., occasioned by Mr. David Levi's Reply to the former Part," 1789.

‡ *Letters*, p. 9. (P.) "In the strict sense of the word," Mr. Levi adds; and grounds the assertion upon Dr. Priestley's rejection of "the miraculous conception of Jesus," and the "opinion that he was the legitimate son of Joseph." See *Second Letter*, p. 11.

sincerity, the honour of God, or the propagation of Christianity, are things of little moment in my serious thoughts." * He perceives in me, "a complete Deist," "under a most jesuitical argument." †

I feel not for myself, but for *you*, when I recite these things. You must be ashamed that one of your body should have begun this important discussion in a manner so unworthy of you. To make any reply to such calumny would answer no purpose. If it be well founded, I must be so utterly unprincipled, that my most solemn declarations would stand for nothing. That I am not the person Mr. Levi describes, I can only appeal to the tenor of my conduct, and to my writings, with both which he is probably unacquainted.

I complain of my opponent's want of profane literature, because it leaves us destitute of some common principles, without which it is impossible to come to any conclusion with respect to the question in debate. He maintains, ‡ that it is contrary to the Scriptures to assert that there were more than four kings of *Persia*; whereas, if there be any faith in history, there were more than twice that number. Nor is this at all contrary to the Scriptures. For it is only said, (*Dan.* xi. 2,) "Behold there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than they all; and by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia." By this, nothing more is to be understood, than that only three kings of *Persia* would intervene between the time of *Daniel*, and that king who would make a formidable invasion of *Greece*.

Mr. Levi also asserts, § that the work of Josippon Ben Gorion, || in Hebrew, was written by the same Josephus who wrote in Greek: whereas no two histories can be more contradictory to one another than they are, even with respect to the very circumstance for which he quotes the *Hebrew* work, viz. the history of king *Agrippa*, who according to *it* was put to death by *Vespasian*, at the siege of Jerusalem, but according to the *Greek*, lived peaceably at Rome, after the Jewish war was over. The Hebrew Josephus makes this Agrippa to have been the Messiah of *Daniel*, ¶ whereas the writer of the Greek applied all the prophecies concerning your Messiah to *Vespasian*.

* *Letters*, p. 30. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 65. (P.)

‡ See *Lardner*, VII. p. 162.

§ *Ibid.* p. 31. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* p. 61. (P.)

¶ *Gothæ Edit.* p. 828. (P.)

Any person possessed of the two histories, as I am, may easily satisfy himself that the *Greek* is the genuine work, and the *Hebrew* copy the production of another person, and entitled to no credit whatever. For the evidence of this I must refer you to Mr. Basnage.*

It is necessary also to the proper discussion of the evidences of Christianity, that the Jews should be well acquainted with the *New Testament*, which Mr. Levi is not. He even says, he “does not find it recorded that Jesus prophesied in the name of God,”† and asserts, that “he preached himself as the light of the world;”‡ whereas nothing can be more evident than that Jesus uniformly asserted his mission from God, and appealed to the miracles which God enabled him to perform; disclaiming all wisdom and power of his own: *John* v. 19: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself:” *ver.* 30: “I can of mine ownself do nothing:” *vers.* 36, 37: “The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me; and the Father himself, *who* hath sent me, hath borne witness of me:” *ver.* 43: “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not.” This and more to the same purpose, is all contained in one single chapter. He likewise says, (*John* xiv. 10,) “The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” Such is the uniform language of Jesus, who, Mr. Levi says, did not speak in the name of God.

Mr. Levi says, that “the professors of Christianity ought to be unanimous before they attempt to convert the Jews,”§ and particularly that we ought first to be agreed among ourselves whether Jesus be God. Besides what I have advanced on this subject in my former *Letters*, || I shall now

* Mr. Levi says, (p. 61, Note,) that Mr. Basnage, “in his great zeal to decry this work, has fallen into a most egregious blunder;” observing, that he first says that it was the production of the *eleventh* century, and then that it was known to *Saadias* in the *tenth* century. But this is a misrepresentation of Mr. Basnage, who, after giving his opinion concerning the real age of this work, viz. that it was the production of the eleventh century, says it did not make its appearance before the *twelfth*, and that the most that can be said is, that it may seem to be referred to by two writers in the *tenth* century, but that “those two testimonies are very obscure and doubtful.” *Liv.* ix. Ch. vi. XIII. p. 159, of the last edition. Could a work of this kind have remained unknown, and unquoted by any writer, Jew or Christian, a thousand years, when so much account has been made of it since? It is absolutely incredible. Dr. Lardner supposes this work to have been written in the beginning of the tenth century. *Testimonies*, I. p. 213. (*P.*) *Works*, VII. pp. 164, 165. See Mr. Levi’s Second *Letter*, pp. 31—33.

† *Letter*, p. 22. (*P.*)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 23. (*P.*)

§ *Ibid.* p. 72. (*P.*)

|| *Supra*, pp. 244, 245.

observe, that it is as much your business to determine what the tenets of Christianity are, as it is ours. You see a person pretending to come to you from the God of your fathers, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and to do such things as no man could do but by the immediate power of God. Is it not then your business to inquire whether he really comes from God, or not? If your ancestors had given no attention to a claim of this kind, they would have rejected even Moses.

Do you, then, consider what Jesus *taught*, and what he *did*, and judge for yourselves, whether what he delivered was worthy of God, and whether the miracles were performed by *the finger of God*, or not. If we who profess Christianity should all agree what its tenets are, it would not, it ought not to satisfy you. We might make too favourable a report concerning it, and such as you would not abide by. Why then do you wait for our agreement, when, if we did agree, that circumstance would not weigh with you at all?

LETTER II.

Of the Miraculous Conception of Jesus and of Contradictions in the Gospel History.

MR. LEVI says, I cannot be a Christian, because “I do not believe the miraculous conception of Jesus.”* But I imagine it is sufficient to denominate a person a Christian, that he believes the divine mission of Jesus, whether he believe any thing else concerning him, or not.

He says that, in order to disbelieve this, I must suppose some parts of our present Gospels to be spurious; and then, he says, “how are we sure that the remainder is authentic?”† I cannot here repeat all that I have written on this subject in the fourth volume of my “History of Early Opinions concerning Christ,” but must content myself with referring you to that work. I shall only observe on this occasion, that I consider the evangelists as mere *historians*, (indeed, they do not pretend to any thing more,) faithful relaters of what they believed to be true. But no histories are received on the mere faith of the writers, but properly on the testimony of the age in which they wrote, which would not have received their accounts, and have handed them down to posterity as *true*, if they had not been known to be so, at least in the main.

* *Letter*, p. 9. (P.) See *supra*, p. 251, Note †.

† *Letter*, p. 82. (P.)

Now the great and leading facts in the Gospel history, the account of the doctrines, the miracles, the death and resurrection of Christ, are so handed down to us. They were believed by Christians in all ages, and from the earliest times. But this is not the case with the account of the miraculous conception. The Christians of your nation (I believe the great body of them, though with some exceptions) never did believe it; and a very learned and highly respected person among the Jewish Christians, I mean *Symmachus*, who translated the *Hebrew* scriptures into *Greek*, wrote a treatise, in a very early period, to refute the story. It was also disbelieved by all the early *Gnostics*, with whose opinions it would have accorded remarkably well.

The miraculous conception, therefore, cannot be said to have the testimony of the age in which it was promulgated; and as the Jews, being natives of the country, had the best opportunity of informing themselves concerning it, their testimony, which is against it, is entitled to the greatest credit.

The *Gospel* used by your countrymen was that of *Matthew*, without the two first chapters, which contain the account of the miraculous conception. It may be presumed, therefore, that they saw sufficient reason for rejecting those chapters, as, in their opinion, not written by *Matthew*; and if so extraordinary a story had been true, it cannot be imagined that either he, or *Mark*, or *John*, would have omitted it. As to the account of *Luke*, whether it was written by him or not, I have shewn that it abounds with the most manifest improbabilities.

As to the disbelief of the miraculous conception drawing after it the disbelief of the whole Gospel history, judge from fact, and not from imagination. Was this the case with the *Ebionites*, and, among them, of *Symmachus*? To say nothing of myself, can it be shewn to have been the case with any other person who has thought as I do with respect to this subject? The greater probability is, that persons finding themselves unable to believe this story, and not seeing how to separate the belief of it from that of the rest of the history, may be led to reject the whole. This, indeed, is, in some measure, your own case.

Mr. Levi's view in urging me with this story, is sufficiently conspicuous. If I should admit the truth of it, he would immediately say, as all your countrymen have done, that there was an end of the argument between us; because Jesus, not being descended in the usual course of generation from the male line of *David*, could not be your *Messiah*.

On the other hand, if the story be rejected, he will reject the whole Gospel history, of which, he says, it is a part.

That the story of the miraculous conception should be started, and gain credit, in a very early period, I do not much wonder at, considering how willing the Christians were to think as highly as possible of their master, with the meanness of whose birth and parentage, as well as the circumstances of his death, they were continually reproached.

One of the contradictions that Mr. Levi observes in the Gospel history, is, that, according to *Matthew*, Jesus was descended from *Nathan*, but according to *Luke* from *Solomon*. * As I reject the introduction to the Gospel of *Matthew*, as not written by him, I am not concerned with this contradiction. There is another, however, on which he lays much stress; which is, that according to *Mark*, Jesus cursed the fig-tree the day after his arrival at Jerusalem, whereas, according to *Matthew*, it was on the day of his arrival. †

But would Mr. Levi, or any reasonable man, reject, as of no value, any other two historians, for so trifling a variation as this? If we do, we must reject all history, and even the books of *Kings* and *Chronicles*. For in them there are greater differences than this. On the contrary, the surest marks of authenticity in histories, the circumstances that entitle them to the fullest credit, are their agreement in things of great consequence, to which the writers could not but attend, and their differing in things of small consequence, to which they would naturally give less attention. This shews that they did not write in concert, but that they are proper *independent evidences* of the facts they relate. Had one of the evangelists said that Jesus drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and another of them asserted that he did no such thing, it would have been more to Mr. Levi's purpose. But even such a difference as this would not invalidate the whole of the Gospel history.

LETTER III.

Of the Miracles of Jesus as a Proof of his divine Mission, and of Mr. Levi's Objections to some of them.

WHAT surprises me most in Mr. Levi, is his professing to pay so little regard to the *miracles* of Jesus. "Whether,"

* *Letter*, p. 81. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 80. (P.)

he says, "it was by the art of deception, or supernatural power, it is not my business to inquire."* But, certainly, nothing can be of more importance than to inquire whether miracles are real or pretended. Because a change in the constitution of nature can only be made by the author of nature, or with his permission; and if one real miracle might be permitted for the purpose of deception, any other, or all of them, might.

If the Divine Being could either by his own immediate power, or the agency of any superior spirit, enable Jesus to heal the sick, to feed the multitudes, to change water into wine, to still a tempest, to walk on the sea, and to raise the dead; and if, after a public execution, (which rendered his death unquestionable,) God should raise him from the dead, and take him up into heaven, (by belief of which, thousands and ten thousands, millions and thousands of millions, were deceived,) he might have permitted all the miracles recorded in the books of Moses, and for the same purpose of deception. As, therefore, you justly, and with indignation, reject the latter supposition, you ought also to reject the former. And if the miracles recorded in the *New Testament* be true, the Christian doctrine is of God. It behoves you, therefore, seriously to inquire whether they be true or not.

Mr. Levi says, that "miracles only were not sufficient to establish a firm belief in the divine mission of Moses."† But, after considering what he urges on the subject, I cannot find any thing more than miracles to have been necessary. Indeed there cannot be any other criterion of divine interposition besides miracles. He says, "It was God speaking with Moses face to face, in the presence of six hundred thousand men, besides women and children."‡ But what was this besides a miracle? If there had been nothing extraordinary in the transaction, nothing more than what might have happened to any other man, would your ancestors have believed in him?

Let us consider what *Moses* himself says, in the very passage quoted by Mr. Levi, *Exod.* xix. 9: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever;" referring, no doubt, to the delivery of the ten commandments in the hearing of all the people, in a distinct, articulate voice, from Mount *Sinai*. This was, indeed, a

* *Letter*, p. 22. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 71. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 68. (P.) See Mr. Levi's *Second Letter*, pp. 34—36.

most extraordinary miracle, and justly confirmed the faith of your ancestors in Moses, so that it has never been shaken since. But it was simply *a miracle* that did it. When Moses, in his first conference with God, at the burning bush, naturally asked, how he should make it appear to his countrymen that God had sent him, he was directed to the changing of his rod into a serpent before them. Nothing but a miracle, of some kind or other, could have convinced them that he came from God. But any real miracle would have been sufficient for the purpose.

Mr. Levi says, that "Moses himself has told us, in the most plain and intelligible language, that miracles only are not a sufficient proof of a divine mission;" * and for this purpose he quotes *Deut. xiii. 1—3*: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign, or a wonder; and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul."

This was probably to forewarn your ancestors, that persons might come to them with such tricks as the *Egyptian* magicians exhibited, (the fallacy of which they might not be able to detect,) and might endeavour to persuade them to worship other gods; but that they were not to listen to such pretended miracles. They knew that real, numerous, and unquestionable miracles had been wrought in proof of their religion, and therefore that there *could* be no other real miracles to overthrow it. Or, which is no uncommon thing, *Moses* might put a case that he knew to be impossible, in order to express himself in a stronger manner. Thus *Paul* says to a Christian church, if himself, "or an angel from heaven," should preach any other doctrine than that which he had taught them, they were not to regard him. *Gal. i. 8*. But he had no idea of the possibility of any such thing.

But you will please to observe, that what *Moses* says does not at all apply to the case of Jesus. For he did not endeavour to draw you to the worship of *other gods*. He was a humble and devout worshipper of the same God that you worship, and he worshipped him in the same manner. There is, therefore, no reason whatever why you should not attend to

* *Letter*, p. 83. (P.)

the miracles of Jesus, as much as to those of Moses, or those of any of the prophets who followed him.

Mr. Levi objects to the miracles of Jesus, as “scarcely just, or rational.”* But if they were *true*, we should be cautious how we pronounce this censure upon them. In general, it cannot be denied that the miracles of Jesus were both benevolent and great, such as were worthy of a messenger from the greatest and best of Beings. With respect to one or two of them, a person so disposed may cavil, as he might at some that are recorded in the *Old Testament*. That which Mr. Levi objects to as *unjust* in our Saviour, is the destruction of the swine, after the cure of the two fierce *demoniacs*. “What right had he,” says Mr. Levi, “to destroy another man’s property?”† I answer, he assumed no right in the case. The miracle was not wrought by him, but by God, whose right to take our property, our lives, or whatever he has given, no man can question. Jesus laid no hand on the swine, and without a miracle, or the immediate act of God, such a number of swine could never have been made to run into the sea.

When Mr. Levi says the miracles of Jesus were not *rational*, he refers to his cursing the barren fig-tree. “He requires,” he says, “the tree to produce fruit out of season.”‡ But the *time of figs* does not necessarily mean the time of the *growing*, or *ripening*, of figs, but rather that of *gathering* them; so that when Jesus saw the tree with leaves, or in a healthy state, he might naturally expect to find fruit also. § But this miracle had less respect to the fig-tree, than to serve as a warning to your ancestors, to bring forth the fruits that God expected of them; intimating, in a very expressive manner, that, if they did not, they would perish like that tree.

Arguing against the pretensions of Jesus to the gift of *prophecy*, Mr. Levi says, “The destruction of Jerusalem was known to all the learned Jews, and therefore Jesus could not be ignorant of it.”|| Consequently, it could not require the spirit of prophecy to foretell all that he did concerning it.

But how does it appear that this great and calamitous event *was* known to all the learned Jews of that age? Nothing is more evident, from the history of it, than that they were far indeed from expecting any such thing in the time of Jesus, or long afterwards. On the contrary, during the

* *Letter*, p. 77. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 78. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* (P.)

§ See Vol. XIII. pp. 279, 280.

|| *Letter*, p. 87. (P.)

very siege, they were continually flattering themselves with the hope of the appearance of the *Messiah*, to deliver them. Besides, the prophecy of *Daniel* is only general, and that of Jesus very particular, describing the circumstances of the siege, and limiting the time of it. He also mentions the fate of the *temple*, concerning which *Daniel* says nothing at all. The taking of the city did not imply the demolition of the temple. This the conquerors might be expected to preserve with care, as *Titus* actually endeavoured to do. And least of all could it have been supposed that the Jews themselves would have promoted the destruction of it.

LETTER IV.

Of the supposed Contradictions between Jesus and Moses.

MR. Levi makes use of another argument, which, if it could be supported, would indeed prove that Jesus was a false prophet. "If," says he, "we compare Jesus with the rest of the prophets, we shall find such a manifest contradiction between him and them, as to demonstrate that both parties could not be messengers of God, as God never contradicts himself."* This he argues on two suppositions; one on that of Christ being God, and the other on his being only a prophet.

"Whether Christ was the second person in the Trinity, as Christians in general hold, or only a prophet, as you and the rest of your sect affirm; I say, in either case, he could not be sent to us in the first place, nor could we receive him, without being hostile to the laws of Moses, as also to God who was the author of them, as acknowledged both by Jews and Christians. For, if he came in the former character, and the doctrine which he preached was intended to maintain that absurd and corrupt tenet, it would be an unanswerable argument that his doctrine never came from God, it being impossible that God should contradict himself. For has he not expressly told us himself, in the first commandment, THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME? This, I think, must necessarily signify, if there be any meaning in language, ONE SUPREME, INTELLIGENT BEING, endued with all possible perfection, power, wisdom, and goodness. And, agreeable to this just, rational, and fundamental doctrine, Moses has, in the most solemn manner,

* *Letter*, p. 25. (P.)

endeavoured to inculcate this most important truth, in the following words: *Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.* Deut. vi. 4. These, besides numberless other passages in the Old Testament, make it plain that we could not receive Christ in the first character, without a breach of the covenant established between God and our nation.”*

In this, all *Unitarian* Christians, and your whole nation, are agreed. But Mr. Levi does not pretend to shew that either Jesus himself, or his apostles, taught any such doctrine as that of the *Trinity*;† and your writers in general prove, against the Christians, that the *Old Testament* contains no such thing. Mr. Levi, therefore, ought not to have left the argument in this state; but have acknowledged, as others of your countrymen have done, that the doctrine of the Trinity is not any doctrine of the *New Testament*, but a gross corruption of Christianity. *Moses* himself is not more explicit in teaching the unity of God than are *Christ* and his apostles, as I have shewn in my former Letters;‡ and this Mr. Levi has not controverted.

I shall now consider what Mr. Levi has alleged to prove that Jesus cannot be received as a true prophet of God, on account of his having contradicted what had been advanced by preceding prophets, and especially by *Moses*, the greatest of them. He quotes for this purpose, *Deut.* iv. 2, and xii. 32: “*Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it*, whereas Christians hold that Jesus had power to abolish the Mosaical dispensation, and which, say they, he actually did. And although you, and some other Christians, believe the perpetual obligation of the law of *Moses*, yet I suppose that a person of your knowledge need not be informed, that it is not the sentiment of Christians in general.”

But has Mr. Levi proved from the *New Testament*, that Christ *did* annul the law of *Moses*? What some Christians have thought on this subject is no more to the purpose than their believing the doctrine of the Trinity. I have shewn in my former Letters, that Christ and the apostles asserted the perpetual obligation of the law of *Moses*; and Mr. Levi has not attempted to prove that I have misrepresented their meaning. Nay, your own writers have argued this before me, against the generality of Christians, who had asserted

* Letter, p. 21. (P.)

† Mr. Levi, however, chiefly relying on the “Ministry of Baptism” in *Matthew*, says, “He that does not believe the doctrine of the Trinity, cannot be a Christian, if the Gospels be true.” *Second Letter*, pp. 23, 24.

‡ *Supra*, p. 264.

that the law of Moses was abolished by the Gospel. You may see my thoughts on this subject at large in the *Theological Repository*, under the signature of HERMAS.* But this is no part of the argument between you and me, but, like that concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, between me and other Christians.

I am satisfied, however, that Mr. Levi has mistaken the sense of *Moses* in the passage he quotes. It is not there said, or intimated, that God would never, *by any future prophet*, make any change in what he had enjoined by Moses. He only warns them, that is, the people in general, who had no particular instruction from God, not to add to the law, or to take from it, that is, without authority from him.

Several additions, you must know, the Divine Being made to your institutions after the time of *Moses*. He was commanded to construct a tabernacle, but *Solomon* was directed to build a magnificent temple. Also the temple described by *Ezekiel* is very different from that of Solomon; and this I imagine you believe to be the pattern of that which is to be erected on your final restoration to your country. In his prophecies there is also a whole set of institutions very different from those of *Moses*.

It is evident, therefore, that the words of *Moses* are not to be interpreted as they are by Mr. Levi. God will always reserve to himself the power of changing his institutions, according as the circumstances of his creatures shall require. And if Jesus was a prophet, (proved to be so by real miracles,) his institutions must have the same authority with those of *Moses* himself, even though they should be different from his. I shall, however, consider all the instances of contradiction that Mr. Levi finds between what *Jesus* delivered and what was taught by *Moses*, that you may see what the amount of them is, and then judge whether they be sufficient to prove that he must be a false prophet.

“*Moses*,” he says, “allowed a man to put away his wife, if he found some uncleanness in her, and she was allowed to marry another; whereas *Jesus* said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery.”† But *Jesus* himself observed, that the permission of divorce by *Moses* was an innovation. *Matt.* xix. 8: “*Moses*, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so.” [*Vers.* 4, 5:] “Have ye not read, that he who made them at the

* See Vol. XII. pp. 442—482.

† *Letter*, p. 27. (P.)

beginning, made them male and female, and said, (*Gen. ii. 24*,) For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they *two* shall be one flesh?" What can express a more indissoluble union than this, as it is recorded by Moses himself? And yet, for "the hardness of your hearts," or because the woman who should be disliked would be subject to cruel treatment, divorces were permitted. But could not the same power which gave the permission, revoke it at his pleasure?

I have no occasion to reply on the same principle to any other of Mr. Levi's charges of contradiction, because they arose among yourselves, and were such additions to the institutions of *Moses*, as are most expressly forbidden in the passage quoted above.

Mr. Levi urges the command of *Jeremiah*, xvii. 21: "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath-day;" whereas Jesus commanded some of the sick persons, whom he healed on that day, to take up their beds, and carry them home; probably to shew that they were perfectly, though suddenly, restored to their vigour. But the meaning of *Jeremiah* was to forbid *habitual labour* "on the sabbath-day," which it appears that the people then made use of; carrying burdens *out of their houses*, and *through the gates of the city*, as on other days; whereas all that Jesus did was to correct a superstitious punctilio in the observance of it. The man who carried his bed to his own house, was not labouring to earn his livelihood. Besides, in that age at least, your own people allowed more labour than Jesus here authorized, as to lead their cattle to water, and relieve them if they fell into pits, &c., though it might require great labour; and they defended themselves when they were attacked "on the sabbath-day." But if what Jesus ordered *had* been a change in the law, surely he who could heal the sick by speaking a word, shewed that he was authorized to do it.

Mr. Levi also charges it as a contradiction to *Moses*, that Jesus did not pronounce sentence of death on the woman taken in adultery.* But in bringing this woman to Jesus, your ancestors only meant to ensnare him. If he had passed sentence of death on her, (which it was no more *his* business, than it was of those who brought her to him,) they would very justly have accused him to the *Roman* governor, as one who had assumed temporal power. Besides, Jesus did not say that the woman *ought* not to have been stoned; but,

* *Letter*, p. 26. (*P.*)

acting in his proper character, as a *prophet*, he bid her *go away, and sin no more*.

The last instance that I shall mention is one with respect to which Mr. Levi is still more evidently mistaken. "He said, (*John* v. 37,) 'The Father himself *who* hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time:'" Mr. Levi should have added, "nor seen his shape," and then he could not have made the remark which follows: "Pray, Sir, what do you think of this expression, which is so contrary to what both Jews and Christians believe, viz. that God spake to the Jewish nation face to face, as recorded by Moses?"* But what Jesus said related to the very persons whom he was addressing, none of whom had heard God speak from Mount *Sinai*, and certainly had not seen any *form* or *shape* there, as *Moses* himself repeatedly declared. But, perhaps, Jesus spake interrogatively, *Have ye not heard his voice, and seen his shape?*† alluding to the voice from heaven, and the descent of the *Holy Spirit* like a dove, which some of his auditors might have heard and seen.

Such are the contradictions which Mr. Levi has charged on the founder of the Christian religion. Do you now judge whether they will authorize you to pronounce him to be a false prophet.

LETTER V.

Of the Sufferings of the Jewish Nation.

As an argument of your nation having offended God beyond any thing that is recorded in the books of the *Old Testament*, I requested you to attend to the extreme severity of your present sufferings, and the long continuance of your banishment from your own country; and I said that a captivity of seventy years was deemed a sufficient punishment for all your transgressions preceding that event.

Mr. Levi replies, that the *Babylonish* Captivity was not a punishment for *all* the sins of the preceding period. "They were carried away to Babylon," he says, "for the sin of not keeping the sabbath of the land, agreeable to what Moses foretold. But for their other sins, viz. *idolatry*, *murder*, and *whoredom*, they did not receive any punishment during the *Babylonish* Captivity, by reason of the shortness of its duration, and therefore this longer captivity was

* *Letter*, p. 88. (P.)

† See Vol. XIII. pp. 166, 167.

necessary to finish *transgression*, that is, *idolatry*; and to make an accomplishment for *sin*, that is, *whoredom*; and to make an atonement for *iniquity*, that is, *murder*." *

Thus does Mr. Levi interpret *Daniel's* famous prophecy of *seventy weeks*, of which he gives the following account: "Daniel, judging that the sins of his nation would be done away by the seventy years' captivity at Babylon, the angel informs him, that their sin would not be atoned for by the seventy years. But verily, as to Israel, he would not only wait seventy years, but seven times seventy years; after which their kingdom should be cut off, and their dominion cease, and they return into captivity, to finish an atonement for their transgressions." †

But the language of the prophecy clearly indicates that the termination of this longer period of seven times *seventy years* would be some joyful event, and not a calamitous one. For it was "to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to *seal up* the vision," (which Mr. Levi renders, by *publicly authenticating* it, ‡) "and to anoint the most holy." Could this be *the beginning of sorrows*?

If by the *most holy*, we understand the holy prophet, or prince, whom we suppose to be mentioned afterwards, under the character of *Messiah the prince*, these four hundred and ninety years will terminate at the time of his being appointed to his office. This I think we are authorized to infer from the manner in which the angel immediately proceeds to explain himself: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the prince, shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks;" § that is, sixty-nine weeks. One week still remains to make up the seventy; but of this the angel gives an account at the close of the prophecy. It was that week in the midst of which the sacrifice and oblation were to cease, which was to be the beginning of farther calamities. But he does not say that these farther calamities would be a punishment inflicted for sins committed before the Babylonish Captivity.

Mr. Levi says, that the word חתך, which we render *determined*, means *cut off*. || But admitting this, it is far from following that this was to be a cutting off, or a sepa-

* Letter, pp. 45, 49. (P.) † Ibid. p. 40. (P.) ‡ Ibid. p. 55. (P.)
§ Dan. ix. 25. See Vol. XII. p. 332, Note A. || Letter, p. 43. (P.)

ration, of the *people* from the holy city. For it was the *period of time* that was cut off, and not the *people*. It is therefore far more natural to suppose, that it means *cutting off, marking, or determining* a period of time, as in our translation.

I would farther observe, that Mr. Levi's account of your present sufferings is neither agreeable to *reason*, nor to the *Scriptures*. It is no where said, either before the captivity, or afterwards, that it was intended as a punishment for not observing the *sabbath* in particular, but for *sin* in general. It is only said that, during that captivity, the land would keep its sabbaths, which it had not been allowed to do before. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 21: "To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate, she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years."* But this is far from amounting to a proof that this captivity was for no other purpose.

If we consider the conduct of your ancestors after their return from *Babylon*, we shall perceive no appearance of their supposing that they had been punished there for their neglect of the sabbath only, while greater crimes remained to be expiated by heavier judgments at a distant period. The confession they make is of sin in general, and not of neglecting the sabbath in particular. Nay, the neglect of the sabbath is not mentioned at all. *Neh.* ix. 33—35: "Thou art just in all that thou hast brought upon us; for thou hast done right, and we have done wickedly. Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them. For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness which thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them; neither turned they from their wicked works." Here is no mention of the non-observance of the sabbath in particular; which might have been expected, if it had been understood by the people that *that* had been the offence for which *only* they had suffered.

Besides, in how capricious and unworthy a manner does Mr. Levi represent the God of your fathers, the righteous judge of all the earth, as acting; in punishing for one particular sin by a heavy calamity, and after shewing all the marks of forgiveness and reconciliation, reserving his greatest

* See Vol. XI. p. 512.

vengeance for another season, not to commence till six hundred years afterwards! How contrary is this to his own most solemn declaration by Moses, (*Exod.* xx. 5,) that he would visit the sins of the fathers upon the children "unto the third and fourth generation" only, "of them that hate" him!

On the plan of Mr. Levi, even your next restoration to your country will be no proof that God has forgiven your nation *all* the sins they committed before the *Babylonish* Captivity, to say nothing of those committed since. According to him, you may now be suffering for their *idolatry*, while another dispersion may be appointed for their *murders*, and another for their *whoredoms*, in all of which you who suffer had no concern, &c. The very mention of the idea is sufficient to explode it.

Mr. Levi, as if not quite satisfied with this account of your present sufferings, assigns another reason for them, viz. that, besides answering the purpose of *punishment*, they likewise answer that of *instruction*, not to yourselves, but the rest of the world. "As a captivity of four hundred years," he says, "was necessary for the nation of the Jews only to arrive at the true knowledge of God, it must consequently be necessary for this captivity to be much longer, as being the means of bringing all the nations of the earth to the true faith, agreeable to what the prophet Isaiah says: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.' " *

On this I must observe, that neither is it any where said that the design of the bondage in *Egypt* was to teach the *Israelites* the knowledge of the true God, nor that your present dispersion is designed to instruct the world in that knowledge. Nay, so far was the Egyptian bondage from teaching your ancestors this important knowledge, that, though they were the worshippers of the true God when they went into Egypt, they were idolaters when they came out of it. It was their *deliverance* from the yoke of the Egyptians, not their *subjection* to it, that was the means of instructing them, and other nations too, as Moses abundantly testifies.

In like manner, it will be your *restoration* to your own country, and not your present *banishment* from it, that will be the means of convincing all the world of the truth of

your prophecies, and consequently of the truth of your religion, and of confirming them in the faith and pure worship of the God of your fathers to the end of time. The reflection on the whole of your remarkable history, of your prosperity and adversity, in connexion with your adherence to the worship of the true God, and your obedience to his prophets, or your neglect of it and your disobedience, when all the prophecies shall have had their completion, cannot fail to strike and convince all. But the long continuance of your sufferings, unconnected with any future consequences, has no tendency to produce that effect. Nay, the longer you continue in your present state, the more is the faith of mankind staggered, and the greater trial it is to your own faith. Many Christians, who have the same respect for the books of the *Old Testament* with yourselves, judging from present appearances, consider you as abandoned of God, and do not believe that you will ever be restored to your country again.

Consider, then, I intreat you, your real situation, and how your calamities presently followed the rejection of Christ and the apostles, by your ancestors, (and your nation has persisted in rejecting them to this day,) and think whether your receiving them as true prophets of God (who were sent to your nation in the first place) may not be followed by consequences the reverse of those which followed the rejection of them. According to Moses, a restoration to your country will always be the consequence of your repentance of those sins for which you would be expelled from it. *Deut.* xxx. 1—3: “And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind, among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart and with all thy soul; that *then* the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.” Why is not this glorious prophecy fulfilled, but because you have not yet complied with the conditions of it? According to *Moses*, your return to your country is always in your own power. Do your part, and your merciful God and Father will not delay to do his. *

* See Vol. XV. pp. 288—295.

LETTER VI.

Of Daniel's Prophecy of Seventy Weeks.

MR. Levi says, that "the fairest method to conviction with respect to the Messialship of Jesus, is to take a review of all the prophecies concerning the Messiah, from Moses to Malachi, and compare them with the acts of Jesus recorded in the New Testament, to see whether or no they have been fulfilled in his person."* This, he says, he himself has done. This I have also done, and you may see the result of my inquiries in the *Theological Repository*, under the signature of PAMPHILUS.† I did not, in my last Letters, trouble you with all the particulars of this long examination, contenting myself with mentioning one of those prophecies; but it is the only one in which the *Messiah* is mentioned by that name in your sacred books, and that which must have led your ancestors to distinguish your future deliverer by that specific appellation. I have shewn that, according to this celebrated prophecy, this *Messiah* must have made his appearance about the time of Jesus, but certainly long before the present age.

Mr. Levi gives a very different interpretation of this prophecy, in reality the same with that which I quoted from your *Rabbi Isaac*,‡ but without answering my objections to it. He will not allow that the *Messiah*, which is twice mentioned in this prophecy, refers at all to the person whom you *now* distinguish by that title; but says that, in the former part of the prophecy, it is to be understood of *Cyrus*, and in the latter of *Agrippa the younger*; though, surely, nothing can be more unnatural than to explain it in this manner. Can the same term, in two contiguous sentences of the same prophecy, signify two different persons, one of them a heathen prince, and the other a king of Judea, who lived seven hundred years after him?

Mr. Levi supposes, with Rabbi Isaac and Samuel Jarchi, though he does not distinctly express it, that "the going forth of the commandment" means the declaration of the Divine will to Jeremiah.§

* *Letter*, p. 91. (P.)

† See Vol. XII. pp. 411—442.

‡ *Supra*, p. 242.

§ "Ab eo tempore quo Jeremias illam rem proloquutus fuerat, sive à captivitate Zedechiæ usque ad unctum ducem, qui Cyrus est, futuras hebdomadas septem, quæ 49 annos complectuntur." *Munimen Fidei*, p. 338. "Tempus dabitur à die devastationis usque dum veniat Cyrus." *Jarchi Comment.* II. p. 779. (P.)

But nothing is advanced by these writers to make it probable that "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" is coincident with the time of the demolition of it by *Nebuchadnezzar*. The prophecy of *Jeremiah* was first delivered in the fourth year of Jehoiakim and the first of *Nebuchadnezzar*, (*Jer.* xxv. 12,) and repeated, (xxviii. 1, xxix. 10,) in a letter to the captives, in the beginning of the reign of *Zedekiah*.

That *Agrippa* could not be the *latter Messiah*, (if there must be two of them in this prophecy,) I have shewn, by observing that this prince was not killed at the siege of Jerusalem, but probably ended his days peaceably at Rome, long after. *Josephus*, in the history of his own life, has given us two letters of this *Agrippa*,* written after he had perused his history, and consequently several years after the destruction of Jerusalem. He is also mentioned by *Tacitus*, as the ally of the Romans in the Jewish war. And though this writer gives a pretty circumstantial account of the war,† he says nothing of the defection, or death, of that prince in the course of it. By Mr. Levi's own confession, there was a Messiah cut off about that time, and who could this be but Jesus?

Agrippa was too inconsiderable a prince to be the subject of such a prophecy; whereas the figure that Jesus makes in your history is so conspicuous, that it might have been expected that he would have been noticed in your prophecies on some account or other. No Jew, no person of any nation, ever occasioned such a revolution in the religious state of the world (and religion is the great object of your whole constitution) as Jesus Christ has effected. By this single Jew, and his followers, have the idolatrous systems of every nation within the bounds of the whole *Roman* empire, and far beyond it, been already overturned; and, according to present appearances, independent of the prophecies of the *New Testament*, by Christianity, and not by the institutions

* *Josephus* says, he received from *Agrippa* "62 Letters," attesting his correct account of the "Jewish War." Two of these Letters are thus quoted:

"King *Agrippa* to *Josephus*, his dear friend, sendeth greeting. I have read over thy book, with great pleasure; and it appears to me, that thou hast done it much more accurately, and with greater care, than have the other writers. Send me the rest of these books. Farewell, my dear friend."

"King *Agrippa* to *Josephus*.—It seems by what thou hast written, that thou standest in need of no instruction, in order to our information from the beginning. However, when thou comest to me, I will inform thee of a great many things which thou dost not know." *Life*, Sect. lxv. *Whiston*, p. 680.

† *Hist. L.* v. (*P.*)

of Moses as such, will idolatry (to which those institutions were particularly opposed) be extirpated out of the world.

But where will you find so distinguished a person in history noticed at all in your prophecies, if he be not the *Messiah* of *Daniel*, that Messiah who was "to be cut off," and "not for himself," and the same person who in *Daniel* vii. 13, 14, is styled "the son of man," *who will come in* "the clouds of heaven," *and to whom will be* "given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom," whose "dominion shall not pass away," *and whose* "kingdom shall not be destroyed"?

"The seventy weeks," Mr. Levi says, "are, without doubt, four hundred and ninety years, the time from the destruction of the first temple to the destruction of the second."* But if there be any truth in history, the interval between those two events was about six hundred and fifty years; and it is by history that prophecy must be interpreted.

I observed that it must have been from this prophecy that your ancestors first learned to distinguish your great deliverer by the name of *Messiah*. But Mr. Levi says, "It is not the *name* of the Messiah, but the *character* of the person foretold by the prophets, that is to be regarded;"† and he observes that the *Chaldee Paraphrasts* have used that term, in their interpretation of other prophecies which they apply to your future deliverer. But what could have led *them* to apply this term to your great deliverer, but their supposing that he was the same person who had been so denominated in this prophecy of *Daniel*? The term never occurs in any preceding prophecy, except in *Isaiah*, in which it is applied to *Cyrus*. And this heathen prince could never have been supposed to be the person whom you now call *the Messiah*. Undoubtedly, therefore, they who first used this term, as denoting your *future deliverer*, must have thought that he was the same person who was intended in the prophecy of *Daniel*; and it cannot have been any thing but your disappointment, in his not coming about the time signified by *Daniel*, that has led your writers to seek out some other interpretation.

It is manifest that your ancestors in general *did* expect the appearance of the *Messiah* about the time of Jesus Christ; and what could have occasioned their expectation of him so much, *at that particular time*, but a supposition that he was the person intended by *Daniel* in this prophecy, the accomplishment of which you even now acknowledge falls about that time?

* Letter, p. 41. (P.)

† Ibid. p. 94. (P.)

LETTER VII.

The Conclusion.

I CANNOT conclude this second set of Letters to you, without once more entreating you to give due attention to the proper, that is, the historical, evidence of Christianity. For it is on this, which Mr. Levi has not so much as touched upon, that the controversy between us must hinge. Examine the credibility of the Gospel history, as you would that of any other history that should fall into your hands. Consider at what time the books which contain it were published, and how they were received. If their authenticity be equal to that of other credible histories, so that you can depend upon the truth of the *leading facts*, (which is all that we can say of any history,) consider what those leading facts are, who appear to have been the witnesses of them, whether they were persons likely to be deceived themselves, or to attempt to deceive others; and whether, if that might have been their intention, it was in their power to do it.

Let me particularly recommend to your careful perusal the *Letters* I lately addressed to *philosophical unbelievers* in general,* and which I requested that you would consider as addressed to yourselves in particular. If from them it should appear that Jesus wrought real miracles, or did such things as a man could not have done if God had not been with him, you can no more disregard his authority than that of Moses. If, after proving his divine mission by a series of unquestionable miracles, Jesus persisted in declaring himself to be *the Messiah* of your Scriptures, it will be impossible not to allow his claim. And the difficulty which, from a long-confirmed habit of thinking otherwise, you will feel in reconciling to his character and conduct the descriptions of the Messiah in the prophecies, will at length be overcome by more attentive consideration.

Do not reject without examination the hypothesis I mentioned in my former Letters, and which I have maintained at large in the *Theological Repository*, of the distinction between the *Messiah* who was to suffer, and who alone bears that name, and the *prince of the house of David*, under whom you are to enjoy your future glory. †

However, if this supposition should not appear to be well

* See *supra*, p. 227, Note.

† See *ibid.* p. 243.

founded, it will not follow that Jesus is not the *Messiah*, the Messiah whom you expect ; as it may be even *under him*, in some sense or other, that you shall enjoy your future happiness. But with respect to all these things, you should, with diligence, and without prejudice, study the Scriptures, and judge for yourselves ; balancing one difficulty with another, and adopting that scheme which, *on the whole*, shall appear to be attended with the *fewest* difficulties. In the interpretation of prophecies we cannot expect to meet with none.

If after this you be convinced, (as I am confident that, if you examine without prejudice, you will be,) that Jesus wrought real miracles, and that, after dying, he rose from the dead, whatever else he be, he cannot be a person who is not entitled to your regard ; and your conduct with respect to him cannot be a matter of indifference in the sight of God. If God, the God of your fathers, really sent him, he will expect that, as his messenger, you pay due attention to him. To reject *him*, will be to reject *him that sent him*. And if this be the case, can you wonder that he has rejected you ? But *return unto him, and he will return unto you. Mal. iii. 7.*

I have made this second address to you, not because I thought Mr. Levi's arguments formidable. Of this I think you must now be sensible yourselves ; but rather to shew the importance of a defence of your principles, better considered, and better conducted, than his has been ; and it is my earnest wish that the ablest men you have may give their most serious attention to it. To *you* no subject whatever can be half so interesting ; and, be assured, I do not address you as a *disputant*, desirous of triumphing in any advantage I may have in the argument, but from the truest respect to your nation, as most highly distinguished by the great *Father of all the families of the earth*, (to which, as a Christian, I think myself, and all mankind, under infinite obligations,) and from the most earnest wish to promote your welfare, here and hereafter.

I have given much attention to your history, and especially your controversies with Christians in all ages, and I do not wonder that they have issued in confirming your prejudices against Christianity. In all of them the Christians have insisted upon topics with respect to which it was impossible that you should come to an agreement, especially the divinity of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity, that "absurd and corrupt tenet," as Mr. Levi properly calls it. You justly think yourselves excused from giving the least atten-

tion to any arguments that may be alleged in support of it ; since it is an attempt to draw you to the worship of *another God* besides that of your fathers.

It must more particularly excite your indignation, to be told that your ancestors themselves held the doctrine of the Trinity, and that they expected the second person of it in your *Messiah*, than which you know that nothing can be more contrary to truth or probability. *

But as your own writers have never failed to reproach Christians with this doctrine, as not taught even in the *New Testament*, and you find that many Christians reject it with as much indignation as yourselves, you ought to consider this great stumbling block as removed, and therefore that the religion of Christ *may* come from God. Examine, then, with impartiality the evidences of his divine mission, and compare them with those of Moses and your other prophets.

And here the question is not which miracles were the more *splendid*, or which we may imagine to have been more *proper*, and, as Mr. Levi says, more *rational*, but only which are the *best attested*. Of the other we cannot pretend to be competent judges. Every miracle, or real change in the established course of nature, is equally a proof of the interposition of the Author of nature, and may serve as an evidence of a divine mission ; the changing of a rod into a serpent, as much as the passage of your fathers through the *Red Sea*, or the wonderful appearances at *Mount Sinai*. I therefore earnestly intreat, that this, and this only (or at least chiefly), may be the subject of our discussion.

To my endeavours by writing, I shall not fail to add my most earnest prayers to your God and my God, that great Being *in whose hands are the hearts of all men*, and who, by means ordinary or extraordinary, as seems best to his infinite wisdom, *turns them* (*Prov. xxi. 1*) *as the rivers of water, which way soever he pleases*, to remove your prejudices, and every obstacle that for the present prevents your reception of a truth in which you are most nearly interested, and according to his faithful promises, restore you to his favour, never to lose it any more.

I once more subscribe myself, with the greatest respect and affection,

Your brother in the sole worship

Of the one only true God,

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY.

Birmingham, July 1, 1787.

* See Vol. V. p. 19, XVIII. pp. 70, 513.

ADDRESS TO THE JEWS,

PREFIXED TO THE DISCOURSE ON THE RESURRECTION
OF JESUS. *

[1791.]

Worshippers of the One True God,

UNDER this noble appellation, unhappily not as yet applicable to the great body of Christians, it is with peculiar satisfaction that I address you ; having in this respect the honour to rank with you. But do not be offended that the generality of Christians should have been drawn aside into idolatry, worshipping a creature instead of the Creator, when your own ancestors, notwithstanding the manifest tokens of divine power accompanying them, and though he stood in a peculiar relation to them, and shewed them distinguished favour, were for many ages drawn aside in a similar manner, worshipping the sun, the moon, and the host of heaven, instead of the great Being who made them. Time and discipline brought you to a just sense of your duty, and things are evidently taking the same course with Christians.

The time is happily come when the eyes of great numbers are opened to see their errors ; and being enlightened themselves, they are zealous to give their light to their brethren.

We are now well satisfied that Jesus Christ, though a true prophet of God, is no more an object of divine worship than Moses, or any other prophet. He was himself, as one of your nation, a humble worshipper of the God of your fathers, and he instructed his followers to worship no other than him. These Christians are called *Unitarians*, in opposition

* An amicable conference with some Jews who heard this Discourse [in Essex Chapel, see p. 276.] was the occasion of this Address to them. A freer intercourse with Jews and Christians would have a good effect on both. (P.) This Discourse now occupies pp. 325—348, Vol. XV. For the Preface, on its first publication, after having been preached in the Assembly-Room, at Buxton, in 1790 see *Appendix*, No. IX.

to the *Trinitarians*, who pay divine honours to two other persons besides *the one God and Father of all*; and you cannot have been so inattentive to the present state of things among Christians, as not to perceive that the *Unitarian* doctrine is very rapidly gaining ground. The belief of the *divine unity*, and also that of the proper *humanity of Christ*, are not now the private opinions of a few persons only, which some time ago they were almost afraid to avow, but they are publicly professed by great numbers, the most respectable for their ability, their learning, and their piety, among Christians. They are also not confined to one nation, but are to be found in almost every part of the Christian world. Nor are you to judge of the number of *Unitarians* from those who openly profess themselves to be so. They now abound in all churches professedly *Trinitarian*, though, from timidity, or some other motive, which I do not undertake to defend, they do not make a public avowal of their sentiments. By this means, however, things are ripening apace for a general declaration in favour of *Unitarianism*, whenever circumstances shall be favourable to it.

I was much surprised, but far from being displeased, at one instance of your extreme scrupulosity on this subject. Many of you, when you heard me deliver the following discourse in *Essex Chapel*, were, I find, much offended at my calling Christ *Lord*, thinking it to be an appellation too nearly approaching to those which in the Scriptures are appropriated to God. We cannot well be too cautious how we ascribe to any creature, though the most distinguished prophet, those titles which are more usually given to the Supreme Being. But be assured that I had no such meaning, or intention; nor would any Englishman so understand me. By the term *Lord* we simply mean *master*, which all Christians acknowledge Christ to be, since God has appointed him to be our teacher and instructor, and we therefore call ourselves by his name. Be assured also, that I would never make use of the term again, if I thought that, after reflecting on the subject, it would give you the least offence.

Agreeing with you in this fundamental principle of all religion, particularly entrusted, as it were, to the guardianship of your nation, when you were set apart from the rest of the world, you will naturally look upon us with less aversion than you have hitherto justly done upon Christians in general; and I hope you will be induced to give a more patient and candid attention to what we have to propose in favour

of the divine mission of *Christ*, and compare our arguments with those which you are able to produce in proof of the divine mission of *Moses*, and that of your other prophets.

I have already addressed you twice at large upon this important subject; and writing, as you are satisfied, from a principle of the purest good-will to your nation, I am happy to find, that my *Letters* * have not displeased you. † Happy indeed, should I think myself to be, in any measure, the instrument in the hand of Divine Providence of opening the eyes of any of you to your true interest, and thereby of restoring you to the favour of God, and to that future glorious state which is destined for you. This great event, however, God will bring about in his own time, in his own way, and by whatever instruments he pleases. And I hope the time is approaching, when, as the prophet *Zechariah* (chap. xii. 10) has foretold, *he will pour upon you the spirit of grace and of supplication, and when you shall look upon him whom you have pierced, and shall mourn for him as for an only son*, as sensible of the wickedness of your ancestors in rejecting and crucifying Jesus, avowing yourselves his disciples.

Having before requested your attention to the evidences of Christianity in general, let me now solicit it to that of the resurrection of Jesus in particular, as the most important fact in the Gospel history. Examine the evidence which I here lay before you, ‡ as you would that of any other historical facts, such as those which prove the divine mission of *Moses*, and consider whether it be not equally clear and satisfactory. And if *Jesus*, after declaring that he came from God, and after resting the proof of his divine mission, in a more especial manner, on his own resurrection from the dead, did actually rise from the dead, to the complete satisfaction of a sufficient number of the most competent witnesses, you must acknowledge that he was no impostor, and that whatever he declared as from God may be depended upon, as much as that which Moses delivered in his name.

* *Supra* pp. 227—274.

† Mr. David Levi mentions “the consternation into which the greatest part of his nation were thrown, on the appearance of his Reply” to Dr. Priestley’s “first letters. See *supra*, p. 251, Note †. These alarms are described as subsiding when the Jews observed that “Christians of all denominations” appeared to approve “of the attempt,” and to “wish for a thorough discussion of the subject.” *Letters to Dr. Priestley*, Pt. ii. 1789, pp. 3, 5.

‡ Dr. Priestley’s *Letters* gave occasion to Mr. Bicheno’s “Friendly Address to the Jews;” a “Letter to the Jews:—by a Layman;” and Mr. Swain’s “Examination of the Objections of Mr. David Levi, to the Mission, Conduct and Doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ.” See *New Ann. Reg.* VIII. pp. 220, 221.

§ Vol. XV. pp. [329—341].

Do not content yourselves, as I perceive you are apt to do, with an admiration of your laws, as delivered down to you from your forefathers, and with your obligation, as their descendants, to observe them; but carefully review the *history* of your ancestors and of your laws, and consider the *reasons* they had to believe that they came from God. Your sacred books tell you, and I doubt not they tell you truly, that your fathers themselves, besides seeing the miracles of Moses, passed through the Red Sea, which was divided in a miraculous manner for them, and then heard the ten commandments delivered in an audible voice from *Mount Sinai*. But do you consider the *authority* of those books, and the reasons why you receive them as authentic histories of past events, and then compare this evidence with that which Christians allege for the authority of the books of the *New Testament*. And if the facts there recorded be true, if Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by an audible voice from heaven; if, like Moses, he wrought real miracles, or did such things as no man could have done if God had not been with him; if, after being put to death in the most public manner, God raised him from the dead, and, in the sight of numbers of his followers, took him up into heaven, his divine mission can no more be questioned than that of Moses.

Believing this, you ought to declare yourselves *Christians*, though without ceasing to be *Jews*, or discontinuing any of the observances of your own law, * which Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil and to confirm; having solemnly declared, (*Matt.* v. 18,) that “till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

If Jesus was a true prophet, he must likewise be *the Messiah* who, *Daniel* expressly says, (ix. 26,) was to be *cut off*, though under a prince of the house of David (whom, if you please, you may call another *Messiah*, or a person *anointed* of God for a great purpose respecting your nation) you will be restored to your own country, and become the most distinguished people upon earth. †

What then can be your great objection to receiving one more prophet of your own nation than you have hitherto done, and consequently complying with all his injunctions, one of which is to be baptized, in token of your new profession, and another to celebrate the Lord's supper, as you do the passover?

* See Vol. XII. pp. 442—462.

† See *ibid.* pp. 411—442.

Do not wonder that God should require thus much of you by *Christ*, when he required so much more by *Moses*, though he made no such addition to your observances by any of the intermediate prophets. Christ was the most distinguished prophet that your nation ever produced ; as by him God revealed to mankind in a more satisfactory manner than, as far as appears, he had ever done before, the great doctrine of a resurrection to a future immortal life ; and as by his means the Gentile world was brought to the knowledge and worship of the God of your fathers, so as to make a new dispensation, and a most distinguished æra in the religious history of the world. This great object you see is in a great measure effected, and it would have been completely so long ago, if the corruptions of Christianity, and especially the introduction of the idolatrous worship of Jesus Christ, and other human beings, had not put a stop to it. But when this great abomination shall be removed, as there can be no doubt that it soon will be, Christianity will resume its pristine vigour, and enlighten and bless the whole world ; when you will be no longer able to charge Christians with *idolatry*, but, as your prophets say, when *God will be one, and his name one*.

I am happy to find that you think it a considerable advantage to you that so great a part of the world is *Christian*, rather than *Heathen*, and that you live among people who respect your Scriptures as much as you do yourselves. This advantage you would not have had among the *Mahometans*, who, though they allow the inspiration of your prophets, as well as that of Jesus Christ, think that all former revelations were superseded by their prophet Mahomet ; so that they make no use of your Scriptures, or ours, but treat these sacred books with great contempt. In time, I doubt not, you will find yourselves still more indebted to Christians than you have hitherto been, and that the unspeakable obligations we are under to you will be repaid by our services, in your conversion to Christianity. We owe you much indeed, but we live in the hope of discharging the debt. In the mean time we must content ourselves with shewing our gratitude and good-will ; reflecting on the important articles in which we agree with you, and which we derived from you.

The great object of our worship, and all the great articles of our faith, will then be the same. We agree in the belief of one God, the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and that this God is gracious and merciful to all the truly penitent, as, no doubt, he will be to you, when you shall turn to him with

your whole hearts. "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his prophets, so shall you prosper." (2 *Chron.* xx. 20.) *Moses*, speaking of your present calamitous state, dispersed among all the nations of the world, says, (*Deut.* iv. 29—31,) "But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things" (viz. the curses he had mentioned) "are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice, (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God,) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, neither forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he swore unto thee."

This God of your fathers seems now to be preparing the way, in the course of his unsearchable providence, for your restoration to his favour, and to your own country. Let nothing be wanting on your part to render yourselves the proper objects of such great favour. Of all nations you alone have been distinguished by a particular providence, so that your outward prosperity has ever kept pace with your faith and obedience; and this, I doubt not, will be the case to the end of time.

All your persecutions have arisen from *Trinitarian*, that is, *idolatrous* Christians, but all *Unitarians* will naturally love and respect you, acknowledging their unspeakable obligations to you, as the ancient depositaries of the great article of their faith. As one of them, and second to none in love and respect for you, I entreat your attention to this discourse; and with my earnest prayers for your happiness, temporal and eternal, I subscribe myself, as before,

Your brother in the sole worship

Of the one living and true God,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Birmingham, May 20, 1791.

ADDRESS TO THE JEWS.

[1799.]

Descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

BE not offended at a Christian, who from his early years has entertained the greatest respect and veneration for your nation, and who in this work* has endeavoured to vindicate the honour of your religion, and to evince its superiority to all other ancient religions, to address you on the present extraordinary situation of the world in general, and of yourselves in particular. The state of the world at large has, in the great plan of Providence, always borne a particular relation to you, as the *peculiar people of God*, as separated from other nations, to be the instructors of mankind in what most of all concerns them, viz. *religion*, in the knowledge and worship of the one true God ; and it has been by means of your nation that this most valuable knowledge, the only antidote to a wretched and debasing superstition, has been preserved in the world.

While all other nations, several of them more advanced in civilization than yourselves, were sunk in the grossest polytheism and idolatry, and in consequence of it adopted rites the most shocking to humanity and decency, your institutions held out to the world the purest worship of the great Maker of all things, and the most solemn and decent forms of conducting that worship ; a religion subservient to the purest morality, the fundamental principles of which the religions of other nations continually incited them to violate.

Permit me to express the high sense I have of the honour you have done yourselves, and your religion, by your unshaken faith in its divine origin, and the firmness with which you have borne such trials as no other people were ever exposed to, and for a length of time that might have been thought sufficient to exhaust the patience of man.

* The *Comparison*, to which this *Address* was annexed in 1799. See Vol. XVII. pp. 133, 134.

But firmly persuaded of the righteous, though unsearchable, ways of Providence, and having the most glorious prospects before you, your faith is as firm at this day as it was two thousand years ago.

You see in the writings of *Moses* the clearest foresight of your present dispersion into every part of the known world, and all the circumstances of suffering and reproach attending it. But in the same writings you read the most express promises of your restoration and final glory. And the same power that has executed his threatenings, and, to the astonishment of the world, preserved you to this day a separate nation, though mixed with all others, will, no doubt, in his due time, accomplish every thing that he has promised in your favour.

1. You are destined, in the wise counsels of God, to be the first of nations, and your faith and patience will be crowned with an abundant reward. Great beyond example as have been your sufferings, the sure word of prophecy assures you they will bear no sensible proportion to the happiness that awaits you. You know what the prophet *Isaiah* says on this subject :

For thy husband is thy maker ;
 Jehovah God of Hosts is his name :
 And thy redeemer is the Holy One of Israel ;
 The God of the whole earth shall he be called.
 For as a woman forsaken, and deeply afflicted, hath Jehovah
 recalled thee ;
 And as a wife, wedded in youth, but afterwards rejected, saith
 thy God.
 In a little anger have I forsaken thee ;
 But with great mercies will I receive thee again :
 In a short wrath I hid my face for a moment from thee ;
 But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee ;
 Saith thy redeemer Jehovah.
 The same will I do now, as in the days of Noah, when I
 sware,
 That the waters of Noah should no more pass over the earth :
 So have I sworn, that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke
 thee.
 For the mountains shall be removed ;
 And the hills shall be overthrown :
 But my kindness from thee shall not be removed ;
 And the covenant of my peace shall not be overthrown ;
 Saith Jehovah, who beareth towards thee the most tender
 affection.*

* Chap. liv. 5—10. Bp. Lorth. I have here substituted for the common version the translations of *Lorth*, *Blayney*, and *Newcome*, as on former occasions. See Vol. XII. pp. 413, 415, *Notes* *.

Wonderful as was your deliverance from a state of bondage in Egypt, your restoration from your present dispersed and calamitous situation will be an event much more extraordinary and memorable. This is particularly noticed by *Jeremiah* :

After this, behold, the days shall come, saith Jehovah,
When it shall no more be said, As Jehovah liveth,
Who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt :
But, as Jehovah liveth,
Who brought up the children of Israel out of the north country,
And out of all the lands whither he had driven them ;
For I will cause them to return unto their own land,
Which I gave unto their fathers.*

2. You have long wisely ceased to make any exact computation of the *time* when these great events will take place. The prophecies were not intended to make us prophets, any farther than to give us an assurance of great and interesting future events, and some signs of their approach, in order to furnish exercise for our faith, patience, and attentive observation. But the state of the world at present is such as cannot fail to engage your particular attention ; there being evident symptoms of the time of your deliverance being at hand. But when I say *at hand*, I do not mean this year or the next, or the next twenty or thirty years : for what are twenty or thirty years to the duration of your sufferings, and especially to that of your future prosperity ? In the eye of God, or of a man who shall take into his view the whole of the Divine dispensations respecting your nation, even the term of human life is but as a day. However, to make the exercise of your patience the easier to you, it has pleased God, *in whose hands are the hearts of all men, and who turns them as the rivers of water, which way soever he pleases*, to abate the severity of your sufferings ; the treatment you now meet with being every where more favourable than it has been in time past.

Isaiah, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and the other prophets who have enlarged the most on the circumstances of your restoration and future glory, have given no intimation of the *time* when these great events are to take place. But *Daniel*, who barely mentions your restoration, gives several notes of the time ; which, as they have engaged much of my attention, I shall take the liberty to propose to yours, rejoicing with

* Chap. xvi. 14, 15. *Blayney.*

you in the faintest appearance of the dawn of so glorious a day.

From several of the prophecies of *Daniel* I think it may be inferred, that the time of your deliverance is at no great distance. The first of them occurs in *chap. ii.* according to our division of the book, in which an account is given of a prophetic dream of *Nebuchadnezzar's*, and the interpretation of it by *Daniel*. From this we find there were to be four great empires succeeding one another, and that the first of them was the *Babylonian*. This being admitted, the three others must be the *Persian*, the *Macedonian*, and the *Roman*. This last was to be divided into ten others, represented by the toes of the image, which were part of iron and part of clay; and to this description answer the ten kingdoms which arose out of the ruins of the *Roman* empire on its invasion by the northern nations of Europe. In this I believe all interpreters are agreed.

How long each of these empires, or the ten into which it was to be divided, were to continue, is not said; but the ten are to fall at the same time; by the fall of a "stone cut out of a mountain without hands," which breaks the whole image "in pieces," and then becomes "a great mountain," filling "the whole earth." The state of things that follows this is called "a kingdom set up" by "the God of heaven," and which will "never be destroyed," or given to any "other people." *Dan. ii. 44.*

The ten kingdoms in this prophecy are, no doubt, the present *European* monarchies, which from the breaking up of the *Roman* empire to this day, have always been either exactly ten, or sufficiently near to that number. Whenever, therefore, we see any of these monarchies destroyed, without any prospect of its rising again, we may conclude that the fall of the rest will soon follow; that the same train of causes and events which, in the hand of Providence, is the means of overturning the first, will continue to operate till the destruction be universal. For it is one fall of the same stone that breaks them all. It is also evident from the prophecy, that the fall of these monarchies is to be *with violence*, and not by peaceable revolutions. The image is to be "broken in pieces," and *wholly consumed*, yea, to become "like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors," which the wind carries away, so that no place shall be "found for them." The kingdom which the God of heaven will set up after this, and which is to continue for ever, is, no doubt, that of your

nation, which, whether it will have a direct dominion over others, or not, will be the most distinguished, and in some way or other receive the homage, of all others.

The same succession of empires was represented to *Daniel* in the first year of *Belshazzar*, under the figure of *four beasts*. Of this we have an account in *chap. vii.* Of these beasts, the last, which was much stronger than any of the preceding, had ten horns, denoting, no doubt, the same ten kingdoms of the preceding prophecy. Among these horns there arises "another little horn," before which three others were "plucked up by the roots." It had "eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." *Dan. vii. 8, 20.* This *horn* represents a power which was to *make war upon the saints* and to *prevail against them*. It was "to change times and laws," and this power was to be given to it till the time came that the judgment, or supreme power, would be "given to the people of the saints of the Most High," and they should *possess the kingdom*. The termination of this power, therefore, is the commencement of the *kingdom of heaven*, mentioned in the preceding prophecy; and this power was to continue for a period denoted by the phrase, [*ver. 25,*] "a time, times, and the dividing of time," which parallel passages have led all interpreters to say, must mean *three years and a half*; and each day denoting a year, the proper term will be 1260 years.

This "little horn" cannot be any other than the *papal power*, which arose from three different sources, viz. the exarchate of *Ravenna*, the kingdom of *Lombardy*, and the city and territory of *Rome*; and as it existed before the three horns were plucked up by the roots, it is not easy to fix the exact time of its commencement; but on any probable computation, its termination is at hand; and with it that of all the other horns. For the beast itself [*ver. 11*] is to be "slain, his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."

On this event, "one like the son of man," is brought [*ver. 13*] "to the Ancient of Days," in "the clouds of heaven," and there is "given him (*ver. 14*) dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages *shall* serve him. His dominion *will be* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." In the interpretation it is said, (*ver. 27,*) that this kingdom will be "given to the people of the saints of the Most High," so that it will not be a proper absolute monarchy, like those which had preceded it.

This *kingdom of saints* is, no doubt, the same that in the preceding prophecy is called *the kingdom of the God of heaven*, and this *son of man* must be your *Messiah*. And his reign is to commence on the fall of the papal power, accompanied, as it will be, with that of all the powers represented by the other horns of the same beast, or the monarchies of Europe.

“In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar,” *Daniel* [viii. 1] had another *vision*, in some respects of more difficult interpretation than the preceding; but clearly describing a power by which [ver. 11] “the daily sacrifice” was to be “taken away, and the place of *the* sanctuary cast down;” and as this was never accomplished but in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by *Titus*, we must conclude the *Roman* empire to be the power intended in the prophecy. This calamity was to terminate (*verse* 14) in “two thousand and three hundred days;” that is, years, after a date not mentioned, but probably that of the vision. That this mode of computation is not improbable, may appear from the consideration of what God said to Abraham (*Gen.* xv. 13): “Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.” Now your ancestors were not in *Egypt* much more than two hundred years; but their servitude expired four hundred years after the prediction concerning it. The number of years above-mentioned, viz. “two thousand and three hundred,” reckoned from the time of the vision, expired about the year 1760; and as only *centuries* are mentioned in the prophecy, we may expect the termination of this period of your calamity in less than half a century from this time.

In the next *vision* which *Daniel* had, in consequence of his anxiety about the termination of the *seventy years* which, according to the prediction of *Jeremiah*, the Babylonish Captivity was to continue, the most express mention is made of your future happy state, which had been the subject of so many of the former prophecies; but nothing is said that can enable us to fix the time of its commencement. To satisfy *Daniel* in some measure, he is informed of the return of his countrymen from that captivity, and of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. But he is at the same time informed, that this state of peace and safety would not be perpetual; for that both “the city and the sanctuary” would be again destroyed, as “with a flood;” (*Dan.* ix. 26;) and that a much larger period than that of seventy years, even *seventy times seventy*,

(meaning not that exact number of years, for the expression is evidently indeterminate and hyperbolical,) would be necessary to the complete purification of the people, and the accomplishment of the great prophecies in their favour, viz. [ver. 26,] “to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins,” or the punishment of their sins; “to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy,” (or to verify and fulfil the prophecies concerning their final prosperity,) “and to anoint the most holy,” or to build and consecrate the future temple, as described in the prophecy of *Ezekiel* [xl.—xlviii.]. This description does not correspond to any thing that has yet taken place, and cannot agree to any thing short of the final and permanent state of your nation. The literal rendering of what is commonly called “seventy weeks,” is *seventy times seventy*; and nothing but the greatness of the number, and the necessity that all interpreters have thought there was of limiting it to the time of the birth or death of Christ, could have led them to render it otherwise. Seventy times seventy, or 4900 years will certainly carry us back to a time something prior to the call of *Abraham*, which comprehends the whole of the history of your nation. But all this time has been but as the infancy of your nation, and a state of discipline to prepare you for your glorious destination.*

In the last of the visions of *Daniel*, which was [x. 1] “in the third year of Cyrus,” express mention is made of the deliverance of your nation, and of the resurrection of the dead, as coincident with it. *Chap.* xii. 1—4: “At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall

* The numbers *seven* and *seventy* are frequently used in the language of scripture for any number indefinitely great, and therefore exactness is not necessary in the interpretation of them when they occur in prophecy. Thus we read *Gen.* iv. 15, that vengeance would be taken on the person who should kill Cain, *seven-fold*, and *Lamech* says, (ver. 24,) that if the death of *Cain* would “be avenged seven-fold,” his would be “seventy and seven-fold.” In *Isaiah* (xxx. 26) it is said, that “the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people.” Thus when *Peter* asked *Jesus* whether he should forgive an offending and repenting brother seven times, he replied, (*Matt.* xviii. 22,) “I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven.” So here, *seventy times seventy* seems to be used to denote a very great, but indefinite number of years. (*P.*)

awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." This increase of knowledge seems to be mentioned in this place as another mark of the same eventful period.

This prediction of the deliverance of your nation is here represented as following the overthrow of a nation that had made the conquest of "the glorious land," which, no doubt, is *Palestine*, and also "of Egypt," though not of that of the *Edomites*, *Moabites*, or *Ammonites*, who are now among the *Arabs*. And this corresponds so exactly to the *Turks*, that we cannot suppose any other power to be intended. Your restoration, therefore, will follow the overthrow of their empire. *Dan. xi. 40—45*: "The king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow, and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown. But these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; and the Lybians and Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the East and out of the North shall trouble him; therefore he shall go forth with great fury, to destroy and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

If I were to bring before you the Christian prophecies in the book of *Revelation*, I could point out to you more, and more definite, notes of the time, in which you are so much interested; but I forbear to do this in addressing Jews. In the preceding prophecies, the authority of which you acknowledge, there are sufficient indications of the near approach to the termination of your present dispersion, and of your restoration to your own country, the consequent undisturbed and perpetual possession of it, and a state of unexampled prosperity and high distinction in it, as the greatest and most respected of nations.

Putting all these notices together, the glorious time you have been so long waiting for may be expected, soon after the breaking up of the present *European* monarchies, the extinction of the *Papal* power, and the overthrow of the *Turkish* empire, three events which, according to the prophecies above recited, must be nearly coincident; a period you see to be marked by the spirit of prophecy as most calamitous, “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation,” and yet a time of *increasing knowledge*.

And, surely, if this circumstance be one indication of the approach of the time we have been so long looking for, it cannot be very distant. For when, in the whole compass of history, do we read of so destructive a war, as that in which the *European* powers have been engaged the last six years? More pitched battles have been fought in this short space of time, than in the two preceding centuries, which, however, were far from being peaceable; and in all wars, death by the sword is but a small part of the distress and calamity occasioned by war. And yet, judging from appearances, this is but the beginning of troubles. There may be intervals of peace, but we see no prospect of a general and lasting pacification.

As to the monarchies of *Europe*, which, according to the clear sense of the prophecies, are destined to destruction, and nearly at the same time, what confidence can the most sanguine friends of any of them have in their permanence, when that of *France*, which to appearance was more firmly established than any of them, has fallen? No nation ever shewed a stronger attachment to their kings, and their government in general, than the French, from the very beginning of the monarchy, till the moment of the Revolution.

An event more truly remarkable, and, as we may say, more ominous, though it has passed with little notice, because it was effected without fighting, is the fall of the *Papal* power, which in time past made all the other powers of Europe to tremble. Yet having declined gradually, it has fallen at last, to adopt the language of the prophecy concerning it, *without hand*, with little or no effort or exertion of power, while, if you will allow me to speak as a Christian, and quote the prophetic book of *Revelation*, (xviii. 9, 10,) “the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication,” (for this power is there compared to a harlot,) “and lived deliciously with her, bewail her, and lament for her,—standing afar off,” unable to give her any assistance.

This power of the *Pope*, as a temporal prince, being one

of the toes of *Nebuchadnezzar's* image, and one of the horns of *Daniel's* fourth beast, the fall of it will, no doubt, be followed by that of the other powers which are, equally with it, toes of the same image, and horns of the same beast. And though they are not actually fallen, and may, according to particular circumstances, have intervals of peace, they are shaken to their very centres; so that, to a calm observer, their fall may be looked for daily. There may be a revival of the *Papal* power, and even of *monarchy*, in France; but, considering the increasing prevalence of *republican* sentiments, any person may safely pronounce that it cannot be of long continuance. There are in all of them so many internal causes of dissolution, especially their enormous debts and taxes, and those continually accumulating, that even peace cannot be expected to save them, any more than it did France in the same circumstances. And, indeed, their governors seem to be more apprehensive of peace than they are of war.

All *Protestant* expositors of the prophecies, without exception, consider the present monarchies of *Europe* as represented by the toes of *Nebuchadnezzar's* image, and the "ten horns" of *Daniel's* fourth beast, and consequently as devoted to destruction. Dr. Hartley, who wrote in 1747, says, "How near the dissolution of the present governments may be, would be great rashness to affirm. Christ will come in this sense also as a thief in the night." He again says, "It would be great rashness to fix a time for the breaking of the storm that hangs over our heads, as it is blindness and infatuation not to see it, not to be aware that it may break. And yet this infatuation has always attended all falling states." *

As to the *Turkish* empire, which must fall before you can have a permanent and peaceable settlement in your own country, it has been some time on the verge of destruction, and may be said to stand by the jealousy and forbearance of the neighbouring Christian powers. But the part the Turks have taken in the present war may accelerate this most desirable event. I call it most *desirable*, and it is so on more accounts than one. The cause of science, of general liberty, and of civilization, as well as that of religion, call for it. The finest part of the surface of the earth, the best soil, and the most delightful climate, almost the cradle, as it is sometimes called, of the human race, the first

* *Observations on Man*, 1791, II. pp. 368, 455. (P.) See Vol. XV. pp. 575—578.

peopled and civilized, is held by them in a state of servitude, barbarity, and great depopulation. *Palestine*, "the glory of all lands," which is now part of the Turkish empire, is almost without inhabitants. It is wholly uncultivated, keeping its sabbaths, empty, and ready to receive you. But till the fall of this power, which, without deriving any advantage from it, keeps possession of that country, it is impossible that it can be yours. I, therefore, earnestly pray for its dissolution.

If the *increase of knowledge* of any kind be a mark of the approach of the happy events above-mentioned, it cannot be denied but we may be looking for them. For certainly a greater advance has been made in every branch of useful knowledge in the last half century, than in almost all preceding time.

3. In the present disturbed state of things, though deeply interested in the events, you will, I doubt not, see the wisdom of following the direction of the Divine Being by the prophet *Isaiah*, respecting this very time. After speaking of your recovery from your present low and depressed condition, saying,

Thy dead shall live; my deceased, they shall rise:
Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust!
For thy dew is as the dew of the dawn;
But the earth shall cast forth, as an abortion, the deceased tyrants:*

denoting either an actual resurrection of your ancestors, or the revival of the nation, as from a state of death, it is immediately added,

Come, O my people; retire into thy secret apartments;
And shut thy door after thee:
Hide thyself for a little while, for a moment;
Until the indignation shall have passed away.
For behold, Jehovah issueth forth from his place;
To punish for his iniquity the inhabitant of the earth:
And the earth shall disclose the blood that is upon her;
And shall no longer cover her slain.†

Doubt not but your deliverance will be effected without your contrivance. God will open a way for you in the course of his providence, though not, perhaps, in so miraculous a manner as in your deliverance from *Egypt*. The history of your former attempts to recover the possession of your country by force of arms will, it is hoped, be a sufficient admonition to you on this occasion. I cannot, how-

* Ch. xxvi. 19. Bp. *Lowth*.

† Ch. xxvi. 20, 21. Bp. *Lowth*.

ever, conceal my apprehensions for you on this head; as the prophecies contain intimations of some very considerable suffering previous to your restoration, similar to that of your ancestors in the interval between their leaving *Egypt*, and their settlement in the land of *Canaan*, in consequence of their impatience and refractory disposition. Attend particularly to the following passage in the prophecy of *Ezekiel*: “As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out will I reign over you. And I will bring you forth from the people, and I will assemble you from the countries, wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the desert of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the desert (when I brought them out) of the land of *Egypt*; so will I plead with you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you under the chastisement of the covenant. I will also purge out from among you the rebels, and the transgressors against me; I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, but they shall not enter into the land of *Israel*: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.”* That you will suffer much after your arrival in *Palestine*, and before your peaceable settlement in it, you are sufficiently apprized in the prophecy of *Zechariah* [xiv. 2]. But, no doubt, those of you who, like *Caleb* and *Joshua*, exercise faith in God, and put your trust in him, will be preserved in every trial.

4. As there are many express and clear predictions of great calamities that will befall all the nations that have oppressed you, you may be tempted to revenge yourselves on your enemies, or at least to rejoice in their misfortunes. But vengeance should be left to God, who is the only proper judge in the case. They are not the Christians of the present age of whom you have much reason to complain.† Your persecutors have been long dead, and all sincere and intelligent Christians, notwithstanding all that their ancestors, whenever you have had power, have suffered from you, bear you the greatest good-will, and feel the most sincere compassion for you. The Supreme Being, the God of all the earth, punishes nations in their distant pos-

* *Ch.* xx. 33—38. *Newcome.*

† These Mr. David Levi represents as “more enlightened,” and having “entirely abandoned persecution.” *Letters to Dr. Priestley*, Pt. ii. p. 4.

terity; and, as in the case of "the Amorites," (*Gen. xv. 16*), often waits till *their iniquity be full*; in consequence of which, many guilty individuals escape punishment, and many innocent persons suffer in this world. But as *his ways are not as our ways*, we should not endeavour to imitate him in this, and act by the same rule. Our faculties are not equal to so enlarged and comprehensive a plan of conduct, nor have we, like him, power to rectify the inequalities we make in this state by dispensations in any other. Cherish, therefore, a benevolent and forgiving spirit, as what is most pleasing to God, and will, therefore, be most advantageous to yourselves in the end.

5. As a motive to this general benevolence towards other nations, the reverse of the spirit with which you and other nations have hitherto regarded each other, attend to the many intimations that are given in your prophecies, that in future time there will be perfect harmony between you and the nations that were formerly the most hostile to you, even the *Egyptians* and *Assyrians*.

In that day, there shall be an altar to Jehovah,
In the midst of the land of Egypt;
And a pillar by the border thereof to Jehovah:
And it shall be for a sign, and for a witness,
'To Jehovah God of Hosts in the land of Egypt:
That, when they cried unto Jehovah because of oppressors,
He sent unto them a saviour, and a vindicator, and he delivered them.

And Jehovah shall be known to Egypt,
And the Egyptians shall know Jehovah in that day;
And they shall serve him with sacrifice and oblation,
And they shall vow a vow unto Jehovah, and shall perform it.
And Jehovah shall smite Egypt, smiting and healing her;
And they shall turn unto Jehovah, and he will be intreated by them, and will heal them.

In that day, there shall be a high way from Egypt to Assyria;
And the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria:

And the Egyptian shall worship with the Assyrian.

In that day, Israel shall be reckoned a third,

Together with Egypt and Assyria;

A blessing in the midst of the earth:

Whom Jehovah God of Hosts hath blessed, saying,

Blessed be my people, Egypt;

And Assyria, the work of my hands;

And Israel, mine inheritance.*

You see that even the *Egyptians* are, in some sense or other, called *the people of God*, and, therefore, must be en-

titled to your respect and affection, as brethren. Express mention is made in your prophecies of many persons from all nations joining you on your restoration, and even becoming incorporated with you, as one nation, and enjoying all the same privileges.

For Jehovah will have compassion on Jacob,
And will yet choose Israel.
And he shall give them rest upon their own land :
And the stranger shall be joined unto them,
And shall cleave unto the house of Jacob.*

“ And ye shall divide this land among you, even among the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, *that* ye shall cause it to fall unto you for an inheritance, and unto the sojourners that sojourn among you, who beget children among you : and they shall be unto you as he that is born in the land among the sons of Israel ; they shall cause *the land* to fall unto them for an inheritance together with you, among the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass *that*, in what tribe the sojourner sojourneth, there shall ye appoint *him* his inheritance, saith the Lord Jehovah.”†

6. As a spirit of revenge is very unbecoming *the peculiar people of God*, a spirit of pride and arrogance is no less so. And remember that God is the universal parent, the God of the numerous *Gentiles*, as well as of the single nation of *Jews* ; and that, strictly speaking, *there is no respect of persons with him*. It was not for your sakes only, or chiefly, that you are distinguished from other nations ; but because such a distinction was necessary to the instruction and moral discipline of the world. You ever have been, and still are, the instructors of mankind ; but the institution of teachers, and also that of magistrates, respects those who are to be taught and governed ; and, though occupying the most honourable place in society, they stand in the relation of *servants* to that great body of which they are members, and to whom they are subservient. They are the honourable *means* and *instruments*, in the great plan of Providence, but not the *object* and *end*. That by your means all mankind are to be brought to the knowledge and worship of the true God, and, therefore, that this was the proper end and use of the distinction to which you are raised, is evident from the general current of prophecy. I shall call to your recollection a few passages to that purpose.

It shall come to pass in the latter days ;
The mountain of the house of Jehovah shall be established on the
top of the mountains ;

* *Isai.* xiv. 1. Bp. *Lowth*,

† *Ezek.* xlvii. 21—23. *Newcome*.

And it shall be exalted above the hills :
 And all nations shall flow unto it.
 And many peoples shall go, and shall say :
 Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah ;
 To the house of the God of Jacob :
 And he will teach us of his ways ;
 And we will walk in his paths :
 For from Sion shall go forth the law ;
 And the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.
 And he shall judge among the nations ;
 And shall work conviction in many peoples :
 And they shall beat their swords into plough-shares,
 And their spears into pruning-hooks :
 Nation shall not lift up sword against nation ;
 Neither shall they learn war any more.*

Thus saith the God, even Jehovah,
 Who created the heavens, and stretched them out ;
 Who spread abroad the earth, and the produce thereof ;
 Who giveth breath to the people upon it,
 And spirit to them that tread thereon :
 I Jehovah have called thee for a righteous purpose ;
 And I will take hold of thy hand, and will preserve thee ;
 And I will give thee for a covenant to the people, for a light to
 the nations.

To open the eyes of the blind ;
 To bring the captive out of confinement ;
 And from the dungeon, those that dwell in darkness.†

Burst forth into joy, shout together, ye ruins of Jerusalem !
 For Jehovah hath comforted his people ; he hath redeemed Israel.
 Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm, in the sight of all the
 nations ;

And all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.‡

Look unto me, and be saved, O all ye remote people of the earth ;
 For I am God, and there is none else.

By myself have I sworn ; truth is gone forth from my mouth ;
 The word, and it shall not be revoked :

Surely to me shall every knee bow, shall every tongue swear.§

And the nations shall walk in thy light ;
 And kings in the brightness of thy sun-rising. ||

Surely, as the earth pusheth forth her tender shoots ;
 And as a garden maketh her seed to germinate :
 So shall the Lord Jehovah cause righteousness to spring forth ;
 And praise, in the presence of all the nations. ¶

For I know their deeds, and their devices ;
 And I come to gather all the nations and tongues together ;
 And they shall come, and shall see my glory.
 And I will impart to them a sign ;
 And of those that escape I will send to the nations :
 To Tarshish, Phul, and Lud, who draw the bow ;
 Tubal, and Javan, the far distant coasts :

* *Isaiah* ii. 2—4. Bp. Lowth.

† *Isaiah* lli. 9, 10. Bp. Lowth.

|| *Isaiah* lx. 3. Bp. Lowth.

‡ *Isaiah* xlii. 5—7. Bp. Lowth.

§ *Isaiah* xlv. 22, 23. Bp. Lowth.

¶ *Isaiah* lxi. 11. Bp. Lowth.

To those, who never heard my name ;
 And who never saw my glory :
 And they shall declare my glory among the nations.
 And they shall bring all your brethren,
 From all the nations, for an oblation to Jehovah ;
 On horses, and in litters, and in couches ;
 On mules, and on dromedaries ;
 To my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith Jehovah :
 Like as the sons of Israel brought the oblation,
 In pure vessels, to the house of Jehovah.
 And of them will I also take,
 For Priests, and for Levites, saith Jehovah.*

7. As you are a nation more immediately under the eye of God, to whom you stand in a nearer relation than any other people, you will, I doubt not, see peculiar reason for looking to him in earnest prayer and supplication in the present extraordinary situation of things. Both *Moses* and the later prophets admonish you, that your restoration will depend upon this, and on your thorough repentance of the sins which have brought the just judgments of God upon you. You cannot doubt the happy effect of sincere humiliation and contrition, especially as God has said, (*Isaiah* xlv. 19,) “ The seed of Jacob shall not seek to me in vain.” There are many passages in the writings of your prophets that recommend earnest and general supplication, and with an express view to the present state of things. I shall recite a few of them. *Lev.* xxvi. 40—45: “ If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers ;—then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham,—and I will remember the land. When they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them ; for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, in the sight of the Heathen, that I might be their God. I am the Lord.”

Deut. xxx. 1—8: “ And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul : that then the Lord thy God will turn thy

captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return, and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hated thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments, which I command thee this day.”

In the book of *Ezekiel* there is a passage more expressly to the purpose than even this: “I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries; and bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed: from all your defilements, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh. And my spirit will I put within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and to keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.”* “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, In the day when I shall cleanse you from all your iniquities, and shall cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places to be built, and *when* the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it was desolate in the sight of all that passed by; then shall it be said, ‘This land *that was* desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the cities *that were* waste and desolate and ruined, *are become* fenced, and are inhabited.’ Then the nations that are left round about you shall know that I Jehovah have built the ruined places, and planted the *land which was* desolate; I Jehovah have spoken *it*, and I will do *it*.”† “Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.”‡

Here you see what is incumbent upon you, and expected of you, before your restoration. Humble yourselves, then,

* Ch. xxxvi. 24—28. *Newcome.*

† Ch. xxxvi. 33—36. *Newcome.*

‡ “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will yet seek to do this for the house of Israel.” *Newcome.*

before God in earnest prayer, and have times set apart for the purpose. Many pious Christians will join you.

8. That your complete reformation will be effected, at least after your restoration, is expressly foretold in many prophecies, some of which I have incidentally quoted ; but the most particular account of your repentance and contrition is contained in the prophecy of *Zechariah*, and it is there represented as taking place after your return, when your tribes and families shall be distinguished from each other, which now they are not.

In that day will I make the leaders of Judah
As an hearth of fire among wood,
And as a lamp of fire in a sheaf:
And they shall devour, on the right hand and on the left,
All the people round about.
And Jerusalem shall again be inhabited in her own place in peace.
In that day Jehovah will defend
The inhabitants of Jerusalem :
And he that is feeble among them shall be,
In that day, as David ;
And the house of David *shall be* as God,
As the angel of Jehovah before them.
And it shall come to pass, in that day,
That I will seek to destroy all the nations
Which come against Jerusalem.

And I will pour upon the house of David,
And upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
A spirit of favour and of supplications :
And they shall look on him whom they pierced ;
And they shall mourn for him, as *with* the mourning for an only
son ;
And the bitterness for him *shall be* as the bitterness for a first-born.
In that day the mourning shall be great in Jerusalem,
As the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo.
And the land shall mourn, every family apart :
The family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart ;
The family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart ;
The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart ;
The family (*of the house*) of Simeon apart, and their wives apart ;
All the families which remain,
Every family apart, and their wives apart.—*

We *Christians* have no doubt but that this refers to your being convinced of the sin of your ancestors in the death of Jesus, the greatest prophet that God ever sent to your nation. The language of the prophet describes the very manner in which he was put to death, and it cannot without force be interpreted of any other person. The reading that I follow,

viz. *him for me*,* in *ver. 10*, is not only agreeable to the quotation of the passage in the *New Testament*, but to many manuscripts. So also it is quoted by many of your own writers.† Besides, all the copies have *him* in the next and corresponding clause, viz. “they shall mourn for him,” which cannot, in common construction, be any other than *him whom they had pierced*. This mourning your *S. Jarchi* says, the rabbins suppose will be for *the Messiah the son of Joseph, who will be put to death*. But the hypothesis of your rabbins concerning *two Messiahs*, one a suffering and the other a triumphant one, has no foundation in the Scriptures.

From this remarkable prophecy I cannot help inferring, that your nation in general will not be convinced that *Jesus* was a true prophet, and consequently of the great sin of your ancestors in putting him to death, till after your return; and that this conviction will be produced by his personal appearance to you, as to your countryman *Paul*, who before that, was as incredulous on the subject as any of you can now be. I am willing, however, to hope that, though not your nation in general, yet that some candid individuals among you, may be satisfied on this head before that event.

Permit me, who am a *Christian*, to write in that character; and as no offence is intended, I hope that none will be taken by any of you. You, as *Jews*, will think all our arguments in support of Christianity to have no weight; but the proposal of them by one who writes, as he thinks, from the pure love of truth, though you will think it mere prejudice, cannot do you any harm.

9. I formerly took the liberty to address you on this subject, and had the happiness to find you were satisfied that I wrote from the purest motives, and a sincere respect and good-will to your nation. Having, then, advanced all that I thought necessary for the purpose, I shall not repeat it here. But I cannot help observing that, though one of your nation,‡ a person whom I well know and respect, replied to me, he did not undertake to refute my principal argument, viz. that from *historical evidence*. He did not pretend to point out any defect in the arguments that I advanced for *Jesus* having wrought real miracles, for his having died, and having risen from the dead. And if the Gospel history of those facts be true, whatever may be objected to Christianity on other accounts, the divine mission of *Jesus* will be unquestionable. God would never have suffered any person, pretending to

* In the common Version.

† See *Newcome*; Vol. XV. p. 295.

‡ Mr. David Levi. See *supra*, p. 251.

come from him, to impose upon your nation and the whole world, in so egregious a manner, as Jesus must have done if he had been an impostor. Would God have raised an impostor to life, after a public execution? And yet, in my discourse on that subject,* I have shewn that this one fact has the most convincing evidence that any fact of the kind could possibly have.

If you attentively consider the character of *Jesus*, his great simplicity, his piety, his benevolence, and every other virtue, you must be satisfied that he was incapable of imposture. Compare his character and conduct with that of *Mahomet*,† or any other known impostor, and this argument, of the internal kind, must strike you in a forcible manner. Besides, how was it possible for such a religion as the Christian, preached by persons in low stations, without the advantage of learned education, to have established itself in the world, opposed as it was by every obstacle that could be thrown in its way, if it had not been supported by truth, and the God of truth?

The unbelief of your nation in general has answered an important purpose in the plan of Divine Providence; as nothing else could have given so much satisfaction that Christianity received no aid from civil government, and that the books of your Scriptures are genuine writings, not imposed upon the world by Christians. But this great end being now completely answered by the continuance of your incredulity for such a length of time, I hope the time is approaching when, as the apostle says, (*Rom. xi. 26.*) “all Israel *will* be saved,” an event which will be followed by the conversion of the *Gentiles* in general. Your restoration cannot fail to convince the world of the truth of your religion; and in those circumstances your conversion to Christianity cannot fail to draw after it that of the whole world. God will, no doubt, accomplish both these desirable events in the most proper time; and that this time, the commencement of the kingdom of God and of the *Messiah*, may soon come, is the earnest prayer of every Christian.

With the greatest respect and affection,

I subscribe myself

Your brother in the sole worship of the God of your Fathers,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Northumberland, Oct. 1, 1799.

* See Vol. XV. pp. 325—348.

† See Vol. XVI. pp. 374, 375.

LETTERS TO A YOUNG MAN.



[*London*, 1792, 1793]

LETTERS TO A YOUNG MAN,

PART I.

OCCASIONED BY

Mr. Wakefield's Essay on Public Worship;

To which is added,

A REPLY

TO

Mr. Evanson's Objections to the Observance of the Lord's Day.

Ergo cave ne te falso sub nomine mendax
 Simplicitas fors transversum seducat, et illuc
 Unde referre pedem nequeas trahat. —

BUCHANANUS.

Nec tua laudabis studia, aut aliena reprehendes.

HORACE.

[*London, 1792.*]

PREFACE.

THE following *Letters* were written after reading the first edition of Mr. Wakefield's *Essay*.* A second edition has been published since, and in this, "that he may not appear," as he says, "too morose and unrelenting," he gives a sketch of "a plan of public worship, in which he would acquiesce, till mankind shall be so well disciplined with knowledge and virtue, by means of more learned, assiduous, and disinterested teachers, as to be able to conform with greater accuracy to the real power and spirit of Christianity, delineated in the life and doctrines of its Founder; when the Gospel shall shine in its native splendour, and every mist of

* "A short Enquiry into the Expediency and Propriety of public or social Worship," 1791, 2d and 3d ed. in 1792.

"This tract occasioned, as might have been expected, various answers; some of which were judged by the public to have considerable merit. On most of these,

ceremony and superstition dissolve before its rays."* But this, in my opinion, will not be while human nature is what it now is, or while the world continues. I therefore ask no longer term for the duration of public worship.

In this plan of Mr. Wakefield's, however, I do not discover any thing particularly excellent, or materially differing from the plan of public worship adopted by some whom he, with an evident sneer, calls *Unitarian Dissenters*;† though if Mr. Wakefield be not an absolute *unique* among Christians, this is the class to which he himself belongs, being an Unitarian, and not conforming to the Established Church. He proposes to conclude the service with "a short address from the minister, to God," though without saying whether the people are to join in it; and yet in other places he seems to prefer a liturgy with responses to any other mode of worship. As to *long* or *short*, they are only terms of comparison, and all prayers in general use among us would have appeared short to many of our ancestors.‡ If the generality of the

our author briefly animadverted, in 'A general Reply to the Arguments against the Enquiry into public Worship,' 1792. In the course of the discussion he readily took occasion to retract or qualify some positions which he had too hastily advanced; but to the leading principle of his *Enquiry*, he continued uniformly to adhere, from the honest conviction of his mind." *Mem. of Wakefield*, 1804, l. p. 356, *Note*.

* *Enquiry*, p. 4. (P.)

† Wakefield replies, "— many of your own brethren, who have not yet set up in our *Socinian hypothesis*, are scandalized with you, and very reasonably, for denying them the name of *Unitarian* Christians; and it would be much more honourable to *Christianity*, if these names of distinction were less lavishly employed, especially by a reference to those who are as strenuous in asserting *their* pretensions to a belief of the *Divine Unity* as ourselves: and surely we should allow *them* to know best what they believe.—Our predecessors were called *Christians* first at *Antioch*; let us correct ourselves in future, and call conscientious believers by no *other* name in *England*." *Short Strictures*, 1792, pp. 12, 13.

‡ A *long* prayer, it must be admitted, will scarcely ever occur where a congregation adopt a *Liturgy*, which appears to afford the only adequate representation of *common* or *social* prayer. This opinion may be more generally received and applied to practice, should Nonconformists ever agree to consider the question of a *Liturgy*, separate from that tyrannous imposition with which it has been associated throughout the disgraceful history of what *Priests* and *Statesmen* call the *Church*.

It may, however, deserve more serious consideration than it has yet received from *Unitarian* as well as other Dissenters, whether the minister's emphatically *long* prayer, still generally read or uttered before our congregations, best serve the professed purpose of *social* prayer, or whether indeed the practice be not virtually discountenanced by the precepts and examples of the New Testament. Thus Wakefield, in reply to this passage of the *Letters*, fairly asks, "Are the prayers at your meetings *longer* or *shorter* than the *precepts* and *example* of Christ appear to authorize?" *Short Strictures*, p. 13. See also his *Matthew*, 1782, p. 94, where he remarks, (on ch. vi. 7,) that "all the prayers that occur in the New Testament are short and pertinent." I am aware of an ingenious apology for *long* prayers, and I have no disposition to withhold any remarks from such a pen.

"Even those didactic prayers," says Mrs. Barbauld, "which run out into the enumeration of the attributes of the Divine Being, and of the duties of a virtuous life, though, perhaps, not strictly proper as prayer, have their use in storing the minds of the generality with ideas on these important subjects; and the beauty and

hearers, to whose inclinations ministers will generally conform, do not think the prayers, or the exhortations, too long, they are not too long with respect to themselves, whatever they may be with respect to others. But that Mr. Wakefield should indulge Christians with a mode of worship which he at the same time acknowledges to be not only “without any authority from the Gospel of God, but incon-

sublimity of many of these compositions must operate powerfully in lifting the heart to God, and inspiring it with a love of virtue.” *Remarks on Mr. Wakefield’s Enquiry*, 3d ed. 1792, p. 40.

The same writer afterwards says, “Let it be considered, when the length and abstracted nature of our public prayers is objected to, that we have nothing to take their place. If our attention was excited by processions, garlands, altars, and sacrifices, and every action of our lives intermixed with some religious rite, these expressions of our homage might be more readily dispensed with; but in reality, tedious as Mr. Wakefield may think long prayers, they suit better with the gravity of the national disposition and the philosophic turn of our ideas, than any substitute which could be suggested by the most classic taste. Our prayers are become long, because our ceremonies are short.” *Ibid.* pp. 47, 48.

Yet this writer, I flatter myself, would admit, that if Nonconformists availed themselves of *short ceremonies*, not to fill up an allotted portion of time by listening to *long prayers*, but by recalling “to take their place” the, unhappily, long-neglected *Exposition*, a congregation, considering its various states of age and information, and in which “the rich and the poor meet together,” would be likely to depart with increased scriptural knowledge, without abating in the spirit of devotion, because it had been expressed in words comparatively few.

At present it is, I fear, too generally the practice, for a minister merely to read the Scriptures, just as any inexperienced individual of the congregation might do, if he possessed an audible and well-modulated voice; and, as now, thanks to Mr. Raikes, and the spirit which his benevolence excited, almost every individual may do for himself. The design and connexion of the Scriptures read are, I believe, scarcely ever explained; and as seldom is suggested even a *verbal* amendment of King James’s translation. Thus are unavoidably fostered those prejudices, resulting from early instruction, “a bad effect, but from a noble cause,” which have frequently retarded the attainment of the genuine sense of scripture.

It may be urged that the sermon is designed to explain the Scriptures which have been read. This is not, I apprehend, generally the case. Mrs. Barbauld, shewing how “nothing that is taught at all is taught in so vague and desultory a manner as the doctrines of religion,” alleges “the custom of prefixing to every pulpit discourse a sentence, taken indiscriminately from any part of the Scriptures, under the name of a text, which at first implying an exposition, was afterwards used to suggest a subject, and is now, [1792,] by degrees, dwindling into a motto.” *Ibid.* pp. 63, 64.

Thus, while a pastor, unconscious, probably, of the small proportion of his flock to whom he can be intelligible, is reading from the pulpit one of those elaborate discourses which are called his *great sermons*, and which, from the press, shall perpetuate his reputation for metaphysical acuteness, classical taste, or accurate discrimination of human character,

“The hungry sheep look up and are not fed.”

Mrs. Barbauld makes the following just complaint, deserving the most serious consideration of all who devote themselves to the honourable offices of religious instruction: “A congregation may attend for years, even a good preacher, and never hear the evidences of either natural or revealed religion regularly explained to them: they may attend for years, and never hear a connected system of moral duties extending to the different situations and relations of life: they may attend for years, and not even gain any clear idea of the history and chronology of the Old and New Testament, which are read to them every Sunday.” *Ibid.*

sistent with its true character,"* appears to me not a little extraordinary. Surely nothing to which this description can properly apply ought to be tolerated by any Christian, in condescension to any man, or any prejudice.

I am sorry to see so much appearance of bigotry against the whole body of *Dissenters*, mixed with so many professions of uncommon liberality, as appears in this pamphlet.† Alas, what have they done? What have they done to provoke the implacable resentment of Mr. Wakefield?

* *Enquiry*, p. 56. (P.)

† On the appearance of these *Letters*, Mr. Wakefield immediately published those *short*, but severe *strictures*, to which I have already referred, and I think it due to his memory here to express my firm conviction, that the style of recrimination too observable in that pamphlet, and unworthy of his general courtesy and benevolence, was such as the author, on reconsideration, by no means approved. He has, however, in the following paragraphs, recorded his dispassionate judgment, "of the Dissenting ministry," those whom he "had opportunities of knowing of the *Presbyterian* denomination; those," he adds, "who call themselves, and very justly too, liberal Dissenters."

"These," says Mr. Wakefield, "take them altogether, are, in one word, the most respectable set of men I know: genuine lovers of truth, liberty, and science: zealous and attentive to the peculiar duties of their profession beyond all praise, and in their devotion to *theological* subjects much more meritorious than their brethren of the *Church of England*; meeting, indeed, with fewer obstacles to the pursuits of religious knowledge. In their *moral* capacity, they are also in a much greater degree decent and exemplary to their people, than the generality of the clergy of the *Establishment*, and more generally addicted to useful literature. The reasons of this superiority are extremely obvious. No person is educated for the *ministry* with *them*, who does not previously shew a disposition to seriousness and learning: whereas, in the *Church*, a boy is brought up for a *clergyman*, because his father can procure him *preferment*: and, if he is fit for no other labour, he is thought capable at least of *digging* in the *Lord's vineyard*. Nor is it of much consequence, whether *his* morals and talents are acceptable to a *congregation*. He is tied to his *parish*, and his *parish* to him, like *husband* and *wife*, for *better* and for *worse*. But in their knowledge of *ancient literature*, as far as it relates to *languages*, and of the *Belles Lettres*, they fall very far short indeed (I speak in general) of the more respectable members of the *Establishment*: nor truly can it be otherwise, as long as every *end* must have its *means*. These branches are not cultivated with such assiduity, such affection, or for so long continuance, among *Dissenters*: and those whom I have met with, are usually very ready to acknowledge their inferiority in this department; and this in proportion to their own learning and good sense." *Short Strictures*, 1792, pp. 6, 7.

To the above complaint of an "appearance of bigotry," Mr. Wakefield replies, "They, who are conversant with my sentiments and my connexions, know that many of my most valuable and beloved friends, to whom I would not wish to be unacceptable on any consideration, are *Dissenters*; whose good-will and affection will, I trust, accompany me to the end of my days, not impaired by calumny, nor separated even by death. *Charity never faileth*.

Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τιμὰν τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων φιλοῦντα,
Πολλῶν ἡμίονων τε καὶ ἵππων προσθεν ἔλοιμαι.

THEOC.

I still prefer fair fame, with better sense,
And more than riches, men's benevolence.

FAWKES.

"But my friends (for they are not faultless and infallible) *must*, and *will*, endure me both to *speak* and *write* of *them* and their *opinions*, and all other things, as they *are*, without partiality and disguise." *Ibid.* pp. 13, 14.

What have they done but, in common with other denominations of Christians, (if they, who have hardly any thing in common, can be called a *denomination*,) adopt modes of public worship, approved by themselves, as most conducive to their own edification? And, surely, the circumstance of *length* or *brevity*, that of *forms* or *no forms*, *responses* or *no responses*, cannot be of so much consequence as to make us the subject of such pointed satire. However, if others be no more affected by it than I feel myself to be, the dart will fall pointless. We have no great reason to dread either the *club of the arguments*,* or the *shafts of the ridicule*, with which we are threatened.

Mr. Wakefield, wishing to appear in the character of a reformer, and to exhibit Christianity in greater purity than it has hitherto been seen in, should have recommended his system by discovering more of the genuine spirit of it than appears in his virulent and unprovoked censures of Dr. Price,† whose character every consideration calls upon me to vindicate. Mr. Wakefield allows him to have been, “in the main, a very virtuous and amiable man, and a great proficient in various parts of learning;” which is certainly merit enough for one man, since no person excels in every thing. But he adds, that he was “exceedingly illiterate, like the majority of the Dissenting ministers,” (for they must come in for their share of censure,) “in the branch most essential to theology; and with all his zeal for civil freedom, no true friend of religious liberty.”

This, in my opinion, (and I certainly knew more of him than Mr. Wakefield can pretend to do,) is a character that is far from being applicable to Dr. Price, or the generality of Dissenting ministers. That Dr. Price had been as well acquainted with the learned languages (for that I suppose to be the branch of knowledge that Mr. Wakefield alludes to) as the generality of the clergy, even those who have been educated at our Universities, I have no doubt, (for the real scholars even among them are not numerous,) and that he retained as much *Latin* and *Greek* as the generality of scholars do at his time of life, I have also no doubt.‡ For

* *Enquiry*, p. iv. (P.)

† It is scarcely necessary to observe, that Mr. Wakefield denied that these *censures*, which are omitted in the 3d Edition of the *Inquiry*, were *unprovoked*. In the first edition of his *Memoirs* he had entered, probably under much misapprehension, into a detail on this subject, which, respect to the memory of such men as *Price* and *Wakefield*, disinclines me to repeat. In his pamphlet Mr. Wakefield remarks, “What I said of Dr. Price, was said in my own defence.” *Strictures*, p. 11.

‡ As the Rev. Mr. George Morgan was better acquainted with the literature of

with most men advancing in life, inferior studies give place to superior ones.

But I will venture to say, that while a person retains so much *Greek* or *Hebrew* (an acquaintance with which last is a rare qualification with the clergy) as to be able to read without assistance only the more easy parts of scripture, he has every requisite of a good critic with respect to any thing deserving particular attention. For this does not depend upon the facility with which he can read the languages in general. With a little more time he will collect the evidence necessary to ascertain the sense of any difficult passage, and form as good an opinion as the more ready scholar. The greatest scholar would hardly choose to publish an opinion concerning the sense of a disputed passage, without consulting *concordances*, *lexicons*, and *indexes*, which the ordinary scholar can also do. And some of the greatest scholars in the learned languages have been very poor divines.*

his uncle, Dr. Price, than I can pretend to be, I requested his account of it, and he has given me his opinion in the following letter :

“Dear Sir,—Dr. Price was by no means a stranger to the Greek and Latin languages. He was induced to give them a considerable degree of attention, by their immediate connexion with some of his favourite pursuits. Early in life his studies directed him to *Cudworth's Intellectual System*. From this work he imbibed a strong partiality for Platonism, and an eager desire to examine the system according to Plato's description of it, in his own language; this he accomplished, though, agreeably to his own confession, after the labour of years, and the experience of very great difficulties. His notes, however, to his *Treatise on Morals*, [Ch. i. Sect. iii.,] will shew that he was not a stranger to the author he admired.

“Besides, there was no part of literature more interesting to Dr. Price than a critical knowledge of the New Testament. This was an object of his pursuit to the latest hour of his life; indeed he read with uncommon avidity whatever related to this subject. His congregation must remember that in his sermons he frequently introduced verbal criticisms, attended with a reference to the original language.

“I will add, that he was so great an admirer of *Epictetus* as always to carry a copy of his *Enchiridion* in his pocket, the Greek of which he interpreted with the utmost ease.

“These circumstances most certainly give Dr. Price no claim to eminence as a classical scholar, but they are sufficient to refute the idle charge of his being *illiterate*; a charge which I should scarcely think to be deserving of any notice, as I should suppose that its effect will be altogether confined to the indulgence of the author's temper.

I am, &c.

G. MORGAN.” (P.)

Mr. G. Morgan, with whom I have occasionally associated, among the friends of civil and religious liberty, by whom his liberal sentiments and manly independence were justly esteemed, “had undertaken,” as his brother, Mr. W. Morgan, relates, “to write a very circumstantial history of his uncle's life, and had made considerable progress in it, when, towards the close of the year 1798, a fatal disorder put a final period to this and all his other pursuits. The confused state in which his papers were found, and the indistinct short hand in which they were written, rendered it impossible either to arrange, or to understand them properly.” *Mem. of Dr. Price*, pp. vi. vii.

* If we may judge of Mr. Wakefield's general system of theology from the following sketch of it, (p. 5,) it is not such as can safely defy either the club of argument, or the shaft of ridicule. “The stupendous doctrine of redemption from the

Besides, to ascertain the true sense of passages of scripture, the knowledge of many things, besides the language in which they are written, is requisite, especially that of customs, opinions, &c. Even the phraseology of scripture may not be sufficiently attended to by those who are proficient in the language in general. This also appears from Mr. Wakefield's interpretation of our Saviour's language, on which he lays so much stress, the true sense of which he has entirely mistaken, though there is no difficulty whatever in construing every word. The real value of a facility in reading the learned languages is greatly overrated by those who boast of it,* and much more useful things must be sacrificed to it.

Let us now consider how it appears that Dr. Price was "no true friend of religious liberty." "He was forward," Mr. Wakefield says, "on various occasions, to express his disapprobation of my conduct, and oppose my election to the classical tutorship in the college at Hackney." He adds, in a strain of invective surely not becoming any extraordinary measure of the spirit of Christianity, or that can peculiarly recommend any mode of it, "But that Dissenters should thus shew their aversion to *any* religious principles, or *any* practice grounded on these principles, is an excess of inconsistency and impudence, which no language in my power can chastise in terms of suitable indignation and contempt."

A considerable portion of this unutterable indignation and consequence of Adam's transgression by the achievement of immortality through the medium of the Messiah, a doctrine proclaimed, exemplified, and ascertained, by the life of the Son of God, his sacrifice on the cross, and his restoration to life on the third day, was inculcated on mankind amidst a most august display of celestial agency, accompanying this unexampled communication of the Deity, the completion and conclusion, it should seem, of all his religious dispensations to the human race." The union of *Unitarianism*, with such crude conceptions as these, resembles the mixture of *iron and clay* in Nebuchadnezzar's images. (P.)

Mr. Wakefield in reply, considers Dr. Priestley as thinking "meanly of the redemption of mankind by the death of the Son of God," and as disparaging "the magnificent language in which the great apostle speaks of this doctrine." *Strictures*, p. 14.

What was the peculiar notion which Mr. Wakefield in common, I believe, with the late Mr. Tyrwhitt, entertained on this subject, and on which they differed, sometimes eagerly, from others with whom they were agreed in the rejection of Christ's *Pre-existence*, a *Trinity* and a *vicarious Atonement*, I am not able clearly to understand, and now unavailingly regret that during our unreserved intercourse, I neglected to ascertain my friend's opinion. I have supposed it to have been not very different from Dr. Taylor's "Scripture Doctrine of Atonement."

* I by no means wish to detract from the reputation of Mr. Wakefield for that kind of literature to which he has given particular attention, on which he evidently values himself, and with respect to which he pronounces Dissenters in general to be *exceedingly illiterate*. A Dissenter, however, of whose acquaintance with the same branch of literature I have conceived a high opinion, will soon endeavour to give the world an estimate of it. (P.)

contempt, as much at least as fell to the share of Dr. Price, I own belongs to me ; being equally chargeable with this gross inconsistency and impudence. But whereas Dr. Price is happily out of the reach of this sudden storm, which cannot affect the dead, it may overwhelm the living. Being, however, so much interested, let us expostulate a little on the subject.

How can it be said that a man is *no true friend of religious liberty*, merely because he expresses his disapprobation of any particular opinion or conduct, and acts in consequence of it ? It is a liberty which all men, and all Christians, take ; and certainly no man has ever done it with more freedom than Mr. Wakefield himself, and this very pamphlet affords the strongest proof of it.

Dr. Price really thought, as I myself do, that public worship is of great importance, and that an example of habitual attendance upon it is of particular consequence in an instructor of youth ; and he acted upon this principle, as, I believe, all the trustees of the *New College** did, in demurring to elect Mr. Wakefield a tutor in it, till they could procure information whether he attended public worship or not. The answer returned to their inquiries was not decisive, but left room to presume that, as he had attended the public worship of the Church of England, when he was tutor at Warrington, he would do so in a similar situation here ; and with a liberality which Mr. Wakefield should have acknowledged, they were not solicitous what mode of public worship he preferred, though in their opinion his former practice had been inconsistent with his own sentiments, he being an *Unitarian*, while the worship he attended was *Trinitarian*.

When, to the concern of all the friends of the institution, Mr. Wakefield was found to attend no public worship at all, still, with a liberality, which certainly does them honour, and which he would not have found every where, they expressed no public disapprobation of it, but suffered him to continue in his employment till he himself, of his own accord, dissolved the connexion. Could Mr. Wakefield's Cambridge friends, of whose liberality he makes so great a boast, to the disparagement of the Dissenters, have done more ?†

* See Vol. XV. p. 420.

† I do not much wonder that Mr. Wakefield, being a Cambridge man, should boast of his own University, to the disparagement of Dissenters. I, being a Dissenter, may be prejudiced on the other side ; but, in my opinion, it is sufficient praise for the members of the University of Cambridge, if they be allowed to occupy a middle station between those of the University of Oxford, and those who are usually called *rational Dissenters*, with respect to liberality, and an acquaintance with useful knowledge in its full extent. (P.)

Thus much I thought myself called upon to say in defence of Dr. Price, of the Dissenters in general, and of the trustees of the New College in particular. Dr. Price I consider as one of the first of human characters. I have had occasion to give particular attention to it, and I look up to it with equal veneration and affection. Of all men Dr. Price was certainly the farthest from being actuated by the spirit of persecution; and, if true candour ever *had its perfect work* in this world, it was in his breast.

This I say, without wishing to detract from the virtue of the man, who, in my opinion, undervalues him. Mr. Wakefield's "disposition may be as serious, his love of virtue as ardent, and his faith as sincere," as he says it is;* and certainly he is a great sufferer for his religious opinions. "I am persuaded," he says, "that no man in England, of any denomination, has suffered so much hinderance in his secular concerns, on account of his religious opinions, as myself; and this is to my mind a perpetual source of unspeakable exultation."†

I am happy (and this I say without any offensive meaning) that Mr. Wakefield is able to console himself in this manner; for I do not see how, in the nature of things, there can be any remedy in the case till his opinions be more generally received. If he be, as I doubt not he is, truly conscientious in doing every thing in his power to discountenance public worship, may not others be equally conscientious in adhering to it, and even in dreading the influence which his sentiments and practice may have on their children and acquaintance? This negative persecution, if it can be so called, (for in reality it is nothing more than withholding positive encouragement,) is the necessary and unavoidable consequence of Mr. Wakefield's avowed opinions and conduct, and certainly differs very much from that kind of persecution which arises from persons not being content to think and act for themselves, but from a determination to controul the conduct of others.

I had myself full as much reason to complain of persecution, when for several years I was not able to get a single scholar, when I wished to open a school, because I was an *Arian*.‡ For any person who had a dread of Arianism, and of his child being infected by me, could not be expected

* *Enquiry*, p. 26. (P.)

† *Preface*, p. iv. (P.)

‡ See Vol. I. *Memoirs*, 59.

to put him under my care ; nor could I complain of it. It was the necessary consequence of my principles and my situation.

Suppose, what is very possible, that any person should make it a matter of religion to refrain from all labour, not only on Sundays, but on Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath) also, and likewise on all the fasts, festivals, and holidays of every kind in the Popish calendar, would he not necessarily find *hinderance in his secular concerns*, in consequence of acting according to the dictates of his conscience ? He certainly would ; but his friends could not relieve him : they could only pity him. I should think, however, that there are so many persons, especially in the upper ranks of life, disinclined to public worship, that Mr. Wakefield would not meet with much hinderance in his secular concerns from them, at least on this account.

All that any of us can do is to follow the best judgment of our own minds, and abide by the consequences of upright and consistent conduct, whatever they may be. But let us not censure others for following their best judgments, though it may eventually prove inconvenient to us. Many of my enemies, who would not only discountenance, but even destroy me, if they were able, I am far from thinking very ill of ; and if their zeal had no mixture of malignity, there would even be a merit in it. The time will come when we shall know what we are now ignorant of, and likewise one another, better than we do at present ; and then it may happen that the persecutors and persecuted shall rejoice together, each of them having assisted in carrying on the wonderful designs of Providence, in promoting the spread of truth and virtue, though in very different ways.*

I do not see why *the Dissenters* should be treated with such peculiar acrimony by Mr. Wakefield,† or other per-

* See Vol. III. pp. 450, 451 ; XIX. p. 353.

† Who replies, that his opposition is " to some of their *practices*, and not to *them*," and that his " pamphlet speaks with as much severity of the *worship* and *thee worshippers* of the Church of England." *Strictures*, p. 19. This appears in the conclusion of the following remarks on our Lord's denunciation against the " Scribes and Pharisees," *Matt.* xxiii. 14. The whole paragraph appears well worthy of a reader's attention.

" This expostulation does not necessarily involve, we own, an absolute censure of these *long prayers* of the *Pharisees*, here specified ; but, if we reflect on other parts of the conduct of our Lord ; if we observe the *short* formulary which he himself laid down as the standard of our devotions, and the brevity with which he urged his own petition, in a most agonizing moment, *Father ! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me !* if we take, I say, all these considerations into our account, it must be thought highly probable even from *this* passage, that our Lord designed to ex-

sons ; since they are by no means one body of men, or answerable for each other's principles or conduct. As Protestants, and much more as Christians, Mr. Wakefield himself classes with us ; and would he not think it hard if our absurd opinions, or improper conduct, should be ascribed to him by a Catholic, or an Unbeliever ?

To my reply to Mr. Wakefield's *Essay on Public Worship*, I have thought proper to subjoin some *Remarks on Mr. Evanson's Letter* to me on the observance of the *Lord's day*; and I have prefixed to them that article of mine in the *Theological Repository*, which was the occasion of his letter. The subjects are sufficiently similar to give a propriety to these pieces accompanying each other. Mr. Evanson is as chargeable as Mr. Wakefield with a censurable contempt of his opponents;* though, to appearance, not on the poor ground of their being Dissenters.

Both these writers have brought important discussions before the public, and they ought to pursue them to their proper termination. And certainly Mr. Evanson should not have thrown out the reflections that he has done on the authority of Matthew's Gospel, or on the value of the historical evidence of Christianity, without giving the reasons on which such opinions as these are founded.

press his *disapprobation* of LONG PRAYERS. But this conclusion becomes still more reasonable, if we observe also, how, in a former discourse to his disciples, he cautioned them against *vain repetitions* in their *prayers*, after the manner of the *heathen* ; and at the same time reflect, that *long prayers* are scarcely practicable without some of that idle and babbling tautology so explicitly forbidden. And this objection applies forcibly to the *Liturgy of the Church of England*, and (but in a less degree) to the *prayers of dissenting congregations.*" *Enquiry*, Ed. 3, pp. 33, 34.

* Mr. Wakefield, however, thus exhibits what he calls " rude outlines " of his present opponent's intellectual accomplishments :

" In exhibiting the *Doctor's* character, with respect to his merits as an *experimental philosopher*, it would be impertinent in me to offer *my* opinion, who profess myself a most perfect *ignoramus* in every department of *philosophy* unconnected with *geometry*. Nor of course, on this account would my suffrage be at all honourable to the *Doctor* : but I cannot doubt his excellencies in this science to be commensurate with his extraordinary reputation.

" On the subjects of *metaphysics*, *morals*, *politics*, and the *evidences of revelation*, take him all in all, I should exceedingly question, whether the *Doctor* has had an *equal*, certainly no *superior*, either in ancient or modern times.

" Add to these qualifications, an inexhaustible fund of native good sense, which, on all subjects, like a copious perennial stream, enlivens, adorns, and fertilizes in every part of its extended progress ; in conjunction with an acuteness of discernment, and a perspicuity of thought, exhibited in clear and convincing language, beyond any writer within the sphere of my knowledge." *Strictures*, pp. 4, 5.

Mr. Wakefield immediately adds the following qualification of his panegyric : " In points of *philology* and *history*, I beg leave to demur at an appeal to the *Doctor's* tribunal : not, however, because his powers are not fully equal to whatever he should please to undertake with suitable industry and preparation ; but because these subjects require a *long*, *patient*, and *unremitting* investigation, because they are *alone* equal to the employment of a man's *whole* life." *Ibid.* p. 5.

A

VINDICATION OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.



LETTER I.

Of the natural Propriety of social Prayer.

DEAR SIR,

I FIND that you have read Mr. Wakefield's *Essay on the Expediency and Propriety of public or social Worship*, and also Mr. Evanson's *Letter to me, on the Observance of the Lord's day* ;* that these treatises have made a considerable impression on your mind, as they have on the minds of many others, and that, in consequence of this, you have of late absented yourself from all public worship. This I am truly concerned for, because I cannot help thinking that the opinions those gentlemen maintain are ill founded, and may be attended with consequences unfavourable to religion, and the best interests of mankind, which I am sure you have at heart.

Had you objected to prayer universally, as an address to a Being who is previously acquainted with every thing that we can inform him of, who is not defective in any good disposition towards any of his creatures, and whose purposes cannot be changed by any thing that we can say to him, there would, on the principle of *natural religion*, exclusive of what we learn from the Scriptures, have been something specious in your scheme. It is an objection that has given much trouble to ingenious and pious men. But admitting the reasonableness of prayer in general, there cannot, surely, be even any plausible objection to several persons joining in the same prayer, when they all stand in the same relation to the great object of prayer.

What would you say of the regulations of a private family, in which each child should be permitted to speak to his father alone, but any two or three of them should be for-

* " Arguments *against* and *for* the Sabbatical Observance of Sunday, together with a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Priestley, by Edward Evanson, A. M." 1792.

bidden to approach him at the same time, though they had all the very same request to make, and found a convenience in going together? You would certainly think there was something extremely whimsical and unreasonable in such an order. And would it not be equally absurd in the great family of mankind, with respect to God, their common Parent?

The whole of our intercourse with our Maker is founded on the analogy between our relation to him, and that to our earthly parents. If, therefore, a human parent would even wish to see his children come to him together, and he would receive pleasure from such a sight, we are sufficiently authorized to conclude, that the same circumstance is no less pleasing to our Universal Parent; that he will be pleased with seeing his whole family, or as many of them as could be conveniently assembled for the purpose, come to address him in common, declaring their common wants, and expressing their common gratitude and submission.

This is an idea so natural, that it has been adopted by all nations, whether favoured with divine revelation or not. The very idea of each individual applying to the Supreme Being *only separately*, and never, or not generally, in companies, does not appear to have been so much as started before. Modes of worship have been various, as various as the fancies of men could make them; but still it has always been social. Sometimes persons have presented themselves in the temples, or at the altars, together, but have prayed separately. At other times, one of the company has spoken aloud, so as to be the mouth of all the rest; and frequently they have all spoken together, repeating the same words. All these, however, are only varieties of public or social worship.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER II.

Of the Jewish Worship.

DEAR SIR,

IN the *Jewish* religion, the Divine Being himself appointed the forms of it. Not only was there provision for a morning and evening sacrifice, offered in the name of the whole nation, and an annual day of atonement, in which the high-priest went into the holy of holies to supplicate for all the people, but every male of a proper age was obliged to make his appearance before God three times in

the course of every year. This was not merely *public*, but, strictly speaking, *national worship*.

In the usual mode of worship among the *Jews*, the people prayed in the great court of the temple at the time that the priests were offering incense in the holy place, each person praying for himself. But to this, *David* added hymns, to be sung by the *Levites*, accompanied with instruments of music; and in this part of the worship all the people might join. What these hymns were, may be seen in the book of *Psalms*, many of which were composed for this purpose; and several of them consist of joint addresses to the Supreme Being in the plural number, though the purpose of public worship is equally attained by each of the company speaking the same words in the singular number. It is probable, however, that hymns had been used on the same occasion before, and that *David* only improved this part of public worship, now called *psalmody*. The Heathens also had their religious hymns, accompanied with instruments of music, at their sacrifices.

After the *Babylonish Captivity*, the *synagogue worship* was introduced; and this is well known to have consisted of reading the Scriptures, and prayers, and probably of singing also, for such is the worship of the *Jews* in their synagogues at this day, and their customs have not materially changed since the introduction of Christianity, and certainly not in imitation of the customs of Christians. There are Jews in this country: their synagogues are open to Christians, and their liturgies are printed in *Hebrew* and in *English*, and in the title-page of the book the prayers contained in it are said not only "to be publicly read in the synagogues," but also "to be used in all families."*

It is not particularly said that *Jesus* went to the synagogues to *pray*, but neither is it said that he went thither to hear the Scriptures read; but as prayer is well known to have been the proper business of the place, there cannot be a doubt but that, when he attended there, he constantly did both the one and the other; his preaching or teaching in the synagogues being only occasional, and, therefore, particularly mentioned. Had *Jesus* neglected the worship of the *synagogue*, or any part of it, he would, no doubt, have

* The Jews have not usually prayers in private families, but their custom is to resort to their synagogues early in the morning and late in the evening, to pray separately. But whenever, on those occasions, ten persons meet together, they consider themselves as a *congregation*, and then one of them reads the prayers aloud, and the rest say, *Amen*. (P.) See Vol. XVII. pp. 293, 294.

been severely censured, if not excommunicated, on that account. A neglect of this kind could not but have been particularly objected to him by his cavilling and watchful enemies. But no such thing is so much as hinted at in the whole of the Gospel history. To expect the express authority of Christ in favour of public worship, is most unreasonable, when in his time the practice was universal, and his own compliance with it was, no doubt, most strict and exemplary. In fact, to require an express account of his going to the temple, or to the synagogue to pray, when every other Jew did so, and would have been censured for not doing it, is like requiring similar express evidence of his undressing to go to bed. It is fortunate, however, that we have a distinct account of Jesus eating, drinking, and sleeping, or we might have been amused once more with the *Gnostic* notion of his having no gross body that required any sustenance or refreshment of the kind.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER III.

Objections to social Prayer from the Sayings of Christ.

DEAR SIR,

YOU have been led by Mr. Wakefield to lay great stress on our Saviour's saying to the woman of Samaria, (*John* iv. 21, 23,) "Believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.—The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him;" and also on his saying to his disciples, (*Matt.* vi. 6,) "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father *who* is in secret." But to interpret such language as this, as if it was intended to forbid all public worship, or any worship, besides that of the closet, appears to me to betray a most unaccountable ignorance of the scripture phraseology, and on the same principles it might have been concluded that all sacrifices were forbidden to the Jews, even long before the coming of Christ.

David says, (*Psalms* li. 16, 17,) "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." *Isaiah* also says,

Tread my courts no more ; bring no more a vain oblation :
 Incense ! it is an abomination unto me.
 The new moon, and the sabbath, and the assembly proclaimed,
 I cannot endure ; the fast, and the day of restraint.
 Your months, and your solemnities, my soul hateth :
 They are a burthen upon me ; I am weary of bearing them.*

How similar are these and many other passages of the *Old Testament* to the language of our Saviour quoted above ; but how little should we be justified in supposing that they meant any thing more than that internal religion, or that of the heart, is preferable to that which is only external !

In like manner, all that Jesus ever intended by what he said to the woman of Samaria was, that in the Gospel dispensation neither the temple on Mount *Gerizim*, nor that at Jerusalem, would be the only authorized place of national worship ; since the *Gentile Christians* would have no concern with either of them ; and that no worship of this kind was of any consequence, compared with the religion of the heart. For it was customary with the Jews to deny of one thing what they only meant to assert more strongly of another. Thus we read, (*John* i. 17,) “ The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” The meaning of which was, not what the words literally interpreted would signify, viz. that there was no grace or truth in the law of Moses, but that the dispensation of the Gospel is a system of more important truth, and a more gracious or benevolent dispensation than the law.

That Jesus did not mean that the national worship of the temple, or the Jewish dispensation in general, was ever to be discontinued, is evident from his own conduct ; and that the apostles did not so understand him, is evident from theirs ; for they conformed to the law most strictly in every point. *Paul*, who contended the most earnestly for the liberty of the Gentile converts, circumcised *Timothy*, though his father was a *Greek*, because his mother was a *Jewess*. And in order to refute the calumny of some who had said, (*Acts* xxi. 22,) that he had taught all the Jews who were “ among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs,” he purified himself in the temple, and thereby convinced his Jewish brethren that he himself *walked orderly, and kept the law*.

* *Ch.* i. 13, 14, *Bp. Lowth.* See *supra*, p. 282, *Note*.

It is well known that all the *Jewish Christians* to the latest period to which we are able to trace them, continued firmly attached to their peculiar customs. Nor have I the least doubt, but that this remarkable people is to be distinguished by circumcision, sacrifices at Jerusalem, and other customs, after their return to their own country, and the rebuilding their temple, and to continue so to the end of time. All that *Paul* is supposed to have said to the contrary is to be interpreted in the same manner as the preceding quotations from the prophets, and such language as the following, quoted by our Saviour (*Matt.* ix. 13) : "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice;" which is explained by what immediately follows, "and the knowledge of God *rather* than burnt offering;" (*Hos.* vi. 6 ;) the meaning of it being, not that sacrifice was ever to be rejected, but to be considered as of inferior value, when compared with moral duties.

That Jesus did not intend to be understood literally in his directions about *praying in the closet only*, is evident from his own practice ; for he often prayed elsewhere, and in the view and hearing of his disciples. He could therefore only mean to express, in strong, emphatic language, his disapprobation of the abominable ostentation of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* of his time, who stopped to pray even in the public streets, when the hour of prayer was come, when they might have retired out of the view of all men, for the purpose.

A rigorous interpretation of this precept would also be inconsistent with another general and very important direction of his, [*Matt.* v. 16,] to "let *our* light so shine before men," that others, *seeing our good works*, may "glorify *our* Father *who* is in heaven." How is this to be done, if men are never to see others in the performance of that particular good work, which, according to the Scriptures, is the best foundation of all the rest, viz. devotion ?

I do not lay much stress on the phrase *our Father* in the Lord's prayer ; though I think it much more naturally implies a direction for joint or social prayer ; and that, had the idea of Jesus been, that each of his disciples should always pray separately, and never together, he would rather have taught them to say, *my Father*.

That, in the idea of Jesus, his disciples were, on extraordinary occasions at least, to pray jointly, is clearly implied in what he said (*Matt.* xviii. 19, 20) : "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my

Father *who* is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The meaning of this seems to be, that the prayers of his apostles would have the same efficacy with their heavenly Father, as if he himself had been with them, and joined in their petitions. However, the Lord's prayer was evidently intended for ordinary, and not for extraordinary occasions; and accordingly it consists of such petitions as we can at this day, with the greatest propriety, make use of. Indeed, almost the whole of this prayer has been observed to be borrowed from forms that were in use among the Jews.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER IV.

Of the Practice of the Apostles.

DEAR SIR,

MR. WAKEFIELD appeals to the practice of the apostles, as unfavourable to public worship. But this appears to me to be as clearly favourable to it as that of our Saviour: and if we only consider the situation of things in their time, it is almost impossible not to conclude that it *must* have been so.

The apostles, being *Jews*, were accustomed to the business and the forms of synagogue worship, which consisted of reading the Scriptures, and prayer. When they began to preach Christianity, it was in the Jewish synagogues, at the usual times of the Jewish worship, which was morning and evening; that is, at our nine in the forenoon, and three in the afternoon, the times of sacrificing in the temple; and to these Jewish synagogues the Gentiles of the place resorted to hear the apostles. When the Christians separated themselves from the Jews, as we have an account of their doing at Corinth, (*Acts* xviii. 6,) and procured a place of worship of their own, they, no doubt, continued to do just as they had done before in the synagogue. No change would be made but in the place of meeting. They would, of course, assemble on the same day, and at the same hours. There was no motive whatever for a change, except of the *Sabbath* for *Sunday*, which in time took place; but this change would not naturally proceed farther than the day. The business of it, and the manner of conducting the business, would be the same as before, and consequently public prayer would not be omitted.

It is well known to all persons conversant in Christian antiquity, that even the officers and discipline of the Christian church were borrowed from those of the Jewish *synagogue*, the *elders* and *deacons* being the same in both. And notwithstanding all the differences of opinion and practice among Christians, from the time of the apostles to the present, it does not appear that there was ever any difference on *this* subject. All the sects of Christians had their churches, their ministers, and their public worship. Abuses were, no doubt, introduced into every thing, and into this among the rest. But, as we are able to trace the rise and progress of all other abuses ; surely, if public worship itself had been an abuse, which arose after the times of the apostles, there could not have been any peculiar difficulty in tracing it, and ascribing it to its proper author. Such an innovation as this could not have been introduced silently, like a mere opinion. It must have made a great and visible change in the state of things, such as could not but have attracted much notice. I cannot help concluding, therefore, that since no such change as this in the affairs of Christians can be pointed out, but that, notwithstanding every other possible difference, there is no trace of any on this subject, the practice was always universal ; that it began with the apostles, and, though changing in form, has always remained the same in substance, till Mr. Wakefield undertook to dispute the authority, expediency, and propriety of it.

We frequently read of the apostles and other Christians being assembled together, and on almost all these occasions there were prayers. Of the disciples in general it is said, (*Acts* ii. 42,) that “ they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers,” which is evidently a description of their usual worship, as more particularly described by *Justin Martyr* in a later period.

As the Jews had been used to pray for themselves, though in the company of others, both in the *temple* and in the *synagogues*, it is possible that this might be done by many Christians in early times. This is now the practice of the *Catholics* in their churches ; which are open every day, and all day long, for this purpose. But that prayers in which others were expected to join were used in the public assemblies of Christians, in the time of the apostles, is evident from one circumstance, if there were no other, viz. that the audience was expected to say *Amen* to the prayer, which, therefore, must have been delivered in an audible voice, so as to

have disturbed others, if they had at the same time been praying by themselves. 1 Cor. xiv. 16, 17: "When thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified." To say *Amen* to the public prayers was also the custom in the Jewish synagogues, and, in imitation of it, continued to be a response in all Christian churches in early times.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

Of the Expediency and Use of Public Worship.

DEAR SIR,

MR. WAKEFIELD appeals to the practice of Christ and the apostles, as unfavourable to public worship; but he refuses to abide by this appeal. "If it were," he says, "an original appendage of the gospel, the argument of *progressive practical perfection*, grounded on the exigencies of early times, the genius of the Gospel, the analogy of the divine dispensations, and the character of the human mind, would constitute alone, in my estimation, an irrefragable objection, opposed by nothing better than mere *usage* and *prescription*." *

This appears to me to be most uncertain and dangerous ground to go upon; since the mere fancy of any individual Christian, of his having conceived a better and more improved method of devotion than was known to Christ or the apostles, will, on this principle, authorize him to depart from their ideas, and follow his own. It was this principle that led to all the abuses and corruptions of Christian worship in the dark ages. For they were all conceived to be improvements, when they were introduced, and even not contradictory to any thing in the practice of Christ or the apostles. What unbounded scope then will be given to imagination, when no regard is paid to that practice, or any other precedent; but when what was done by Christ himself, and the apostles after him, may be considered as only suiting the mere *infancy* of Christianity, whereas we live in the advanced state of it; when, rejecting their *milk*, we think ourselves fit to take *stronger meat* than they ever ventured upon!

* *Enquiry*, p. 6. (P.) Ed. 3, 1792, p. 16.

With this idea one person may reject the observance of the Lord's day, another all public or social worship, and a third all prayer, public or private, or he may circumscribe the objects of prayer according to his fancy. This also has been done by Mr. Wakefield. "Where is the passage of Scripture," he says, "which gives me authority to pray for *health* (to single out this practice among others) in that unqualified manner with which such petitions are often urged on the ear of the Almighty?" *

In what unqualified, and therefore indecent, manner, some persons may pray for health, or for any thing else, I cannot say, and therefore cannot defend. But that health, or any other temporal blessing, or what is usually deemed such, may be very innocently prayed for, I have no doubt, if we conduct ourselves by scripture precept or example. *Hezekiah* prayed most earnestly for recovery from sickness, that is, for health and life, and was not censured, but graciously heard. *David* both prayed and gave thanks for the same blessing, and others of a similar nature; and our Lord authorizes us to pray for our *daily bread*, which is the means of supporting health and life. †

If the mere possibility of any thing being no blessing, but a curse to us, be a reason why we should not pray for it, such is our ignorance, that we ought to forbear to pray for any thing. What is there in nature that is absolutely, and universally, either good or evil? Certainly not life itself, or any thing that contributes to the preservation of it. Nay, as we ought, in strictness, to judge of *moral* as of *natural* things, can any person be absolutely certain that he shall not be ultimately better, as *Peter* probably was, for falling by any particular temptation? Might he not, therefore, on this principle, question the propriety of our Saviour's direction, to pray that we be not led into temptation? Surely, then, seeing to what it leads, we cannot be too careful how we give way to the idea of aiming at a degree of refinement and perfection, in the method of devotion, unknown to Christ or the apostles, so as to think ourselves at liberty to depart from their principles and practice.

We are certainly allowed by an universal and most indulgent Parent, who knoweth our frame, (and the practice is abundantly authorized in the Scriptures,) to indulge our na-

* *Enquiry*, p. 36. (P.) This passage is not in Ed. 3.

† "It is remarkable that, in the model given us in the Lord's Prayer, there is not a single petition for any virtue or good disposition, but there is one for daily bread." Mrs. Barbauld's *Remarks on Wakefield's Enquiry*, p. 15.

tural wishes for whatever appears to us to be good for us, at the time, and also to express that wish in the form of a prayer, but always with due submission to the will of God, who knows better than we do what is really good for us. Christ even prayed to be excused the pains of a violent death, though he had been apprized that it was the wise intention of God that he should submit to them, and was prepared so to do. To pretend to greater refinement and greater strength of mind, than this, is unnatural. We only deceive and injure ourselves by the attempt.

If an attention be paid to the real principles of human nature, which Mr. Wakefield calls *the character of the human mind*, it appears to me, that we must perceive the wisdom of all the usual means of virtue, and of social prayer among the rest, as what every man, be his attainments what they will, really needs, and may usefully avail himself of. Every passion or affection of our minds is strengthened by proper exercise ; and all the social passions (and those of devotion are all of this class) are best exercised in company. Will any person pretend that he can be so cheerful alone, as in the company of those who are as much exhilarated as himself? Does not every man feel the glow of patriotism with double fervour when others join him in expressing the same patriotic sentiments? Is not this the principle on which all clubs, and social meetings of that kind, are formed? Must not, then, the sentiments of devotion be felt with peculiar fervour when others join us in them, either in hymns or in prayer? Let any man go into a *Catholic* church, abroad, where he will see, as I have done, the natural expressions of devotion, unrestrained by shame, and where there is no suspicion of hypocrisy, and say whether he be not excited to devotion by the sight. If he do not choose to go into a church, he may be some judge in this case by seeing even the counterfeit devotion of an actor on the stage, or viewing it in a good picture.

Certainly there are seasons in which it is best for a man to be alone, and to pour out his heart before his Father, who seeth in secret ; but at other times, especially when the mind is less disposed to fervour, it is equally advantageous to join in the common forms of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and petition, with others. We also feel the sentiments of *brotherly love* with peculiar warmth when we present ourselves at the same time in the presence of our common Father, and jointly express the feelings that belong to our common and most interesting relation to him. This

practice must, in a more especial manner, tend to repress all resentment, and promote compassion and good-will. We are all the offending children of the same Parent, and equally stand in need of the same indulgence and mercy: let us therefore join in supplicating it together.

I do not say that our present forms of devotion will suit a man in the more advanced state of being to which he will be raised in the state after death, because I know nothing of that state; but they appear to be well adapted to human nature in its present state; and we shall consult our improvement infinitely better by conforming to them, than by attempting to get above them, and disregarding them. Besides, the bulk of mankind will never be in that high class of Christians which does not stand in need of the usual modes of improvement; and, in whatever rank our vanity may lead us to place ourselves, we should consider how our example may affect them.

You may think that you can employ your time more usefully in your closet than you can do in the church, or the meeting-house; and in some cases no doubt you may; there being no general rule without some exceptions; and essential social duties may well occasionally supersede the attendance on public worship. But, in general, I am well persuaded that a man cannot spend his time to better purpose than by setting an example of a regard to the forms of religion to those who look up to him; to say nothing of the improvement that he may himself receive there, if he give due attention to the duties of the place. If he be inattentive to them, he may feel his time pass irksomely enough; and, as far as his own improvement is concerned, it might have been better for him to have been elsewhere; but the same objection will lie against any other duty, in any other place.

The mind is improved by a repetition of good impressions. We all know that a serious turn of mind is acquired by reading serious books, and by serious conversation; and that levity of mind is acquired by impressions of an opposite nature; and if every person be the better for hearing a good discourse, on a moral subject, when the attention is not fatigued by the length of it, some real improvement may be had from a repetition of the same sentiments and ideas expressed in the form of a prayer, provided *that* be not too long.

There appear to me to be unreasonable complaints of *long prayers*, when pious *discourses*, of much greater length, are not particularly complained of; and a prayer may be

considered as a particular mode of presenting the same pious sentiments to the mind, so that the hearer of it may be edified, whether he join in it so as to make it his own prayer or not. If this exercise, which requires a considerable effort of the mental faculties, be omitted, the mind, in a passive state, will still be subject to the impression of useful sentiments, and may derive considerable advantage from the service.

The longest prayer that I have ever met with, is that of Bishop Hoadley, in his treatise on the Lord's Supper, and which I have reprinted in my "Forms for Unitarian Worship." But certainly even that long form may be *read* at one time with much satisfaction and advantage. Why then might it not be *heard*, without interruption, with equal advantage? From habit, many persons, we can have no doubt, have felt nothing of weariness or disgust from prayers of an hour long, when, I suppose, Mr. Wakefield would feel all the horrors of languor and distress in less than five minutes. Such is the effect of education; and I should think it no unfavourable circumstance in a person's education, that should enable him to bear, to relish, and to improve by devotional exercises of considerable length.

It is even wise in a man to use some little effort with himself, and not to desist from religious exercises on the first symptoms of weariness, but to persevere in his attention to what he hears; and this is no more than we are obliged to do in a thousand other cases, and what we find our account in. An exercise of any kind that is tiresome at first may not only cease to be tiresome, but even become pleasant, so that we cannot well do without it; and if it be omitted, we shall feel a vacuity which nothing else can supply. This will be equally the case with religious exercises; and is it not desirable that the mind be brought into such a state as not only to bear, but to relish, religious exercises of all kinds; since it must be an effectual security to virtue? We know by reading and observation, that some persons have been able to relish nothing so much. Our Saviour could continue a whole night in prayer to God; and the apostle exhorts us, no doubt from his own practice, to *pray without ceasing*; and, allowing for strong expressions, there must surely be some meaning in such language as this.

If we discontinue religious exercises in public, we shall in time become less disposed to them in private, and be in danger of losing all sense of *habitual devotion*, except what may remain from former good impressions. Habits of

piety or benevolence require not only to be formed, but to be kept up and invigorated by repeated acts; and sure I am, that this habitual devotion, which is the highest attainment of man, and the most perfective of his rational nature, can never be acquired or kept up without such frequent meditation on subjects of religion, reading the Scriptures, and actual or virtual prayer, as will not in general be attained without the aid of public worship, in which the attention will be necessarily solicited at least by proper objects; where the Scriptures are always more or less read, where proper discourses are delivered, and where the Supreme Being is invoked, and numbers join in the same forms of adoration.

In all matters of great importance, it is our wisdom not to depend wholly on voluntary acts, but to lay ourselves under a kind of necessity of doing that which is only ultimately, and not immediately and obviously, beneficial to us. If a young person had nothing of the nature of a *task* imposed upon him, he would hardly be brought to learn any thing. Before he could be brought to apply from free *choice*, the proper season of acquiring some branches of knowledge would be past, and could never be recalled. Now, in many respects, we are all but children and in our noviciate, and we shall act a very unwise part, if we leave those practices which furnish the elements of religious feelings and habits, to our own arbitrary pleasure. In this case the practice will often be neglected, and, consequently, the habit will never be formed.

It is happy for many persons that the force of custom operates as a kind of law, and obliges them to attend to acts of public and private devotion from their early years, and even through the whole of life. By this means they are continually kept within the influence of good impressions, the silent operation of which is unspeakably beneficial to them. It may sometimes subject them to pass an hour in a manner rather unpleasant to them, but by degrees they become reconciled to it; so that, from being irksome, it becomes tolerable, and from tolerable, such as, whether positively pleasurable or not, they do not know how to do without. However, by this means they are kept out of the paths of vice, and in the practice of virtue.

I own myself to be so far from Christian perfection, that I think myself happy in such a necessary mode of spending my time, especially on Sundays, as serves to keep up a constant attention to my situation as an accountable being,

to my relation to God, and my dependence upon him, so that I cannot be long without being reminded of my destination to a future and everlasting state; as by this means I hope I am more in the way of acquiring those sentiments and habits which will qualify me for it. Let others fancy that they can do without these ordinary helps; I cannot but think there would be more wisdom in a greater distrust of themselves. *Happy is he that feareth always.*

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

Of Ostentation in Religion.

DEAR SIR,

YOU think, that by refusing to pray in public, you avoid *ostentation*, which is certainly a bad thing, and ought, no doubt, to be guarded against. But an apparent *indifference to religion* is another bad thing, and therefore ought likewise to be guarded against; and how is it to be known that a man is devout at all, if no person ever see, or know him to be so? To avoid ostentation on this rigorous idea, not only must a man never pray out of his closet, but be careful that it be not known that he prays, even there; because his retiring for that purpose will, *if it be known*, have the same effect. And since the same reason requires that similar precautions be taken with respect to alms-giving, and every other moral virtue, how is the religious man to be distinguished from the irreligious, at least from the careless and indifferent? Is no man ever to discover any zeal for religion, or is his zeal to be shewn in words only, and never by his actions, lest his conduct should savour of ostentation?

Our Lord absolutely requires of his disciples, that they should *confess him before men*; for that, otherwise, he will not confess or acknowledge them before his heavenly Father and the holy angels. But how is this to be done upon the plan of refraining from all public worship, and even from celebrating the Lord's Supper? Is there to be no outward badge or visible token of a man's being a Christian? Is he to wait till he be interrogated on the subject? The primitive Christians thought and acted very differently.

Ostentation of religion is not the vice of the present age. Mankind in general are verging to the opposite extreme. You may even attend to the whole conversation and con-

duct of many persons, who make profession of Christianity, and even habitually attend public worship, and, except in that single circumstance, you would not be able to discover whether they were Christians or not. How much more difficult, then, must it be to discover the Christianity of the man who does not attend Christian worship, never joining in the devotions of his fellow-christians, either in the church, or in his family! Ostentation of religion has existed in this country, especially among the *Puritans* and *Dissenters*; but there are few traces of it to be found at present. The peculiar practices mentioned with ridicule and contempt by Mr. Wakefield, (but which I own I should look upon with respect,) I never heard of before. Why, then, so much precaution against a vice from which there is no danger? It is like directing our whole force to the defence of one side of a fortress, when the enemy is making a breach at the opposite side.

Let us consider a little what is the ground of this so much dreaded ostentation. It is a man's valuing himself on something that is uncommon; not on doing what is merely proper in itself, and simply his duty, but something more than is expected of him. But is this the case with respect to the homage we owe to our Maker? Why should it be deemed a subject of ostentation to acknowledge the being and providence of God, and our obligation and subjection to him? Is this a thing so extraordinary as to afford just cause of boasting? And if I do acknowledge the being and providence of God, and should not be ashamed to profess it, if I were interrogated on the subject, where can be the impropriety of doing it in the most public, as well as in the most private manner? If I wish, as I think I ought to do, that my belief, and corresponding practice, should be known, for the sake of any influence that it may have on others, am I not under obligation to do it in public, that my neighbours and the world may know that I do it? David thought himself bound in duty to do this "in the presence of all the people." (*Psalms* cxvi. 14—18.) Daniel was not content with praying in secret at the court of Babylon, but chose to pray in such a manner as to shew that he was neither ashamed nor afraid to do it, (*Dan.* vi. 10,) and he is not blamed for his ostentation on that account.

When you have considered with attention what I have advanced in these *Letters*, in favour of *public worship*, I flatter myself you will be convinced of the reasonableness

and real value of it; and not be carried away, as young persons are apt to be, with what has nothing to recommend it besides its novelty, seeming liberality, and remoteness from vulgar prejudice. Be especially upon your guard against that dislike of restraint which is peculiarly incident to youth, and suspect yourself, and suspend your determinations, when the experience of mankind is against you. An institution recommended by the constant observance of all ages and all nations, and especially all Christians, and which has never been objected to before yesterday, will probably be found to have serious uses, and certainly should not be abandoned till after a very deliberate examination.

I am, my young friend,

Your sincere well-wisher,

Clapton,
March 24, 1792.

J. PRIESTLEY.

THE

Observance of the Lord's Day vindicated

AGAINST THE

OBJECTIONS OF EUBULUS,

IN THE THEOLOGICAL REPOSITORY.

GENTLEMEN,

IN addition to the observations of *Philander** and *Subsidiarius*,† and in reply to the communications of *Eubulus*,‡ I beg leave to make a few remarks on what he has advanced with respect to the manner in which Christians in general spend the Sunday, or the Lord's day, making it a cessation from all worldly business.

This, *Eubulus* says, is “an institution which cannot be productive of any valuable ends, but such as are easily attained without it.” It “not only occasions a loss to individuals, and to the community at large, of one seventh part of the industry of the manufacturers and labourers of every

* *Theol. Repos.* VI. pp. 22—38, 113—135.

† *Ibid.* V. pp. 342—355; VI. pp. 352—371.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 331—343.

kind ; but, what is infinitely more important, induces a very large majority of that most useful and numerous part of the people, to mispend that seventh of their time in dissipation and intemperance, which too naturally and too certainly lead them to vicious immoralities, and crimes of every degree.”*

In support of this opinion, he says, “ The apostles and first disciples of Jesus Christ are no where said to have distinguished the first day of the week, in any manner whatsoever ;”† and again, “ the Christians of the second century did not observe, and consequently had not received, any such institution from the apostles of Jesus Christ, and their immediate disciples.”‡

Farther, speaking of the writers “ of the three first centuries,” he says, “ Instead of informing us such a sabbath was kept, they expressly assure us, that neither had the Gospel enjoined, nor did they practise any such observance. —In the first and purest ages of Christianity, their meetings were short, and either very early in the morning, before the usual hours of business, after which they departed, each to his several daily occupations, or else in the evening, after all the business of the day was ended.”§

As *Eubulus* seems to acknowledge that the practice of the second and third centuries will enable us to ascertain what was the practice of the apostles, and agreeable to the will of Christ, I shall endeavour to satisfy him, that *Sunday* was spent by Christians of that age, as far as circumstances would permit, in the same manner as it is generally spent now, viz. that it was considered as *a sacred day*, and that then Christians passed as much time in places of public worship as they do now.

I need not quote particular passages to prove, what must be allowed by all, viz. that in every place in which Christians were numerous, there was a place for their assembling themselves, distinct from a private house. This is evident from *Paul's* Epistles to the *Corinthians*, especially 1 *Cor.* xi. 22. Indeed it is natural to suppose, that Christians would imitate the Jews in this respect. In these places of general assembly, the epistles directed to whole churches were, no doubt, publicly read, as they continued to be in after times. In these places several services were regularly performed, and proper officers were appointed, and paid for the purpose.

* *Theol. Repos.* V. pp. 342, 343. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 345. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* VI. p. 365. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* V. pp. 348, 349. (P.)

We read in the *New Testament* of *elders*, *deacons*, and *deaconesses*. This so exactly resembles the custom of a later period, that it affords a considerable presumption that those officers were employed in the same manner from the beginning, viz. some of them in the instruction of Christians assembled for that purpose, and especially on the Lord's day.

That there were these assemblies of Christians, and that they were held on the Lord's day, appears pretty clearly from the epistles of *Ignatius*; which, whether genuine or not, were, no doubt, written within the period mentioned by *Eubulus*.

Exhorting Christians to perfect unanimity, he says, "As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father, being united to him, neither by himself, nor yet by his apostles, so neither do ye any thing without your bishop and presbyters. Neither endeavour to let any thing appear rational to yourselves apart; but being come together into the same place, have one common prayer, one common supplication, one mind, one hope, in charity undefiled.—Wherefore come ye all together as unto one temple of God, as to one altar, as to one Jesus Christ, who proceeded from one Father, and exists in one, and is returned to one."*

Again, speaking of perfect Christians, he says, "No longer observing sabbaths, but keeping the Lord's day, in which also our life is sprung up in him, and through his death," &c.†

To these places of general assembly, which were called *churches*, Christians came sometimes from considerable distances, which must have taken up much time, as also must the business that was done when they were assembled. The most authentic account of this is found in *Justin Martyr*, and is as follows:

"On the day that is called Sunday, there is an assembly of all who live in the cities, or in the country; and the Acts of the Apostles, and the writings of the Prophets are read,

* Μηδε πειρασθῆναι εὐλογον τι φαινέσθαι ἰδιῶν ὑμῶν· ἀλλ' ἐπὶ το αὐτῷ μιᾷ προσευχῇ, μιᾷ δεήσει, εἰς νεῖς, μιᾷ ἐλπίδι, ἐν ἀγαπῇ, ἐν τῇ χαρᾷ τῇ ἀμωμῇ. Ἐἰς ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστῷ, ὃν ἀμεινον ἔθεν ἐστίν. Πάντες ἢν ὡς εἰς ἓνα ναόν συνῶρεχέτε Θεῷ, ὡς ἐπὶ το ἐν θυσιαστηρίῳ, ὡς ἐπὶ ἓνα Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν ἀπ' ἑνὸς πατρὸς προελθόντα, καὶ εἰς ἓνα οὐρα καὶ χωρησαντα. Ign. Ad. Mag. C. vii. p. 19. (P.)

† Εἰ ἢν ἐν παλαιαῖς πραγμασίῃς ἀναγραφέντες εἰς καινολόγα ἐλπίδος ἡλυθόν; μηκέτι σαββαλίζοντες ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν (ζῶν) ζῶντες, ἐν ᾗ καὶ ζῶν ἡμῶν ἀνετείλεν δι' αὐτῆς, &c. Ibid. C. ix. p. 20. The Greek has the word ζῶν, but as it is not in the Latin translation, and without it there is a better contrast to keeping the sabbath, mentioned immediately before, it is, I believe, universally considered as an interpolation. See the note of *Cotelerius* on the passage. (P.)

according as the time will permit. The president discourses, instructing the people, and exhorting them to good actions. Then we stand up to pray, and after prayer, bread and wine, with water, are brought, and the president offers prayers and thanksgiving as he is able, and the people join in saying Amen. Then there is a distribution and a partaking of the things for which thanks were given, and they are sent to those who are absent, by the deacons. The rich give according to their pleasure, and what is collected is deposited with the president for the relief of widows, and orphans, the sick," &c.*

This is certainly very similar to the account that any person would now give of Christians spending the Lord's day. Nothing is said of this business being transacted in the morning or evening only; so that we cannot but conclude that it was done in mid-day; and it must have taken up a considerable part of it.

The Lord's day had not the appellation of a *sabbath*, nor was it a *fast*; but it was always called a *festival*; and both with the *Heathens* and the *Jews*, festival days were no more employed in labour than fast days, though on them they were at liberty to work if they pleased.

The writer of the Epistle of *Barnabas*, comparing the Jewish religion with the Christian, says, "The sabbaths which ye now keep are not acceptable to me; but those which I have made, when, resting from all things, I shall begin the eighth day, that is, the beginning of the old world. For which cause we observe the eighth day with gladness, in which Jesus rose from the dead; and having manifested himself to his disciples, ascended into heaven."†

* Τῇ τῇ ἡλίῃ λεγομένῃ ἡμέρᾳ πάντων κατὰ πόλεις ἡ ἀγρὸς μενοντων, ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνελευσὶς γίνεται, καὶ τὰ ἀπομνημονευσματὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων, ἡ τὰ συγγραμματα τῶν προφητῶν, ἀναγινωσκείται μέχρις ἐγχαίρει. Ἐἵτα, παύσαμεν τὴν ἀναγινωσκοντῶν, ὁ προεστὼς δια λόγῃ τὴν νῆδεσιαν καὶ προκλήσιν τῆς τῶν καλῶν τῶτων μιμησεὺς ποιεῖται. Ἐπειτα ἀνίσταμεθα κοινῇ πάντες, καὶ εὐχὰς πεμπομεν* παύσαμεν ἡμῶν τῆς εὐχῆς, αἷτος προσφέρειται, καὶ οἶνος καὶ ὕδωρ* καὶ ὁ προεστὼς εὐχὰς ὁμοίως καὶ εὐχαριστίας ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ ἀναπέμπει, καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἐπευφημεῖ, λέγων τὸ Ἀμήν. Καὶ ἡ διαδοσις καὶ ἡ μεταληψὶς ἀπο τῶν εὐχαριστηθέντων ἱεραστῶ γίνεται, καὶ τοῖς οὐ παρῇσι διὰ διακονῶν πεμπεῖται. *Apol. 1mo. Edit. Thirdly, p. 97. (P.)*

† Ὅρατε πῶς λέγει· οὐ τὰ νῦν σαββάτα ἐμοὶ δέκτα ἀλλ' ἃ πεποίηκα ἐν ἃ καταπαύσας τὰ πάντα, ἀρχὴν ἡμέρας ὀγδοῆς ποιήσω, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀλλῇ κόσμῳ ἀρχὴν. Διὸ καὶ ἀγομεν τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ὀγδοὴν εἰς εὐφροσύνην, ἐν ἣ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν, καὶ φανερωθεὶς ἀνέβη εἰς τοὺς οὐρανούς. *Barnabæ Epist. C. xvii. (P.)*

"Cotelerius, in endeavouring to prove that by this passage is intended the religious observance of Sunday, is not ashamed to produce three evidences, to two of which, contrary to his usual exactness, he gives no references. First, Irenæus, who says they derive from the apostles the directions not to fast or kneel on the Lord's day, or during pentecost. This is to be met with only in the *Quest. et Respon. ad Authod.*, a work ascribed by some to Justin, but of no certain author

Tertullian, comparing the festivals of the Heathens with those of Christians, says, "If you would indulge to pleasure, you may; and not on one day, but on many. With the Heathens, festival days return once a-year, but to thee every eighth day is a festival."*

Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, in his letter to the Church of Rome, quoted by *Eusebius*, says, "This day, being the Lord's day, we keep it holy. In it we read your epistle, as also the first epistle of Clemens."†

Clemens Alexandrinus says, that "a true Christian, according to the commands of Christ, observes the Lord's day, by casting out all evil thoughts, and entertaining all good ones, glorifying the resurrection of the Lord on that day."‡ The same writer even calls the Lord's day, though not a sabbath, a *day of rest*, the *chief of days*, *our rest indeed*; intimating, at the same time, that the observance of the seventh day was intended to prepare the way for the observance of the eighth.§

or date. Q. 115. It would prove, however, more than the Christians of the present age will require. Two passages of Ignatius, one of which is from his interpolated epistle, (*here called Epist. ad Magnesios*), and is only a misrepresentation of the quotation we have already considered of that author. The other, from the Epistle to the Philippians, ascribed to Ignatius, but not admitted to be his. This declares every person who fasts on the sabbath, or Lord's day, guilty of the murder of Christ, *χρικοκτονος*. A little too much also for these times." See "A Letter to the Author of Thoughts on the Manners of the Great," 1788, pp. 72, 73, Note.

* "Si quid et carni indulgendum est, habes. Non tamen dies tantum, sed et plures. Nam Ethnicis semel annuus dies quisque festus est, tibi octavus quisque dies." *De Idolatria*, Cap. xiv. p. 94. (P.)

† Την σημερον εν κυριακην αγιαν ημεραν διαγαγομεν, εν η ανεγνωκαμεν υμων την επιστολην ην εξομεν, αι ποτε αναγινωσκοντες νεδετεισθαι, ως και την προτερην ημιν δια κλημεντος γραφεισαν. *Euseb. Hist. L. iv. C. xxiii. p. 187.* (P.)

‡ 'Ουτ' εντόλην την κατα ευαγγελιον διαπραξαμεν, κυριακην εκεινην την ημεραν ποιει, οτ' αν αποβαλλη φαυλον νοημα, και γνωσικον προσλαβη, την εν αυτω τη Κυρια ανασασιν δοξαζων. *Clem. Alex. Strom. VII. p. 877, Potteri ed.* (P.)

§ 'Η εβδομη τοινυν ημερα αναπαυσις κηρυσσεται, αποχη κακων, ετοιμαζουσα την αρχιγονον ημεραν, την τω οντι αναπαυσιν ημων' την δε και πρωτην τω οντι φωτ' γενεσιν, εν ο τα παντα συνδεωρεται και παντα κληρονομειται' εκ ταυτης της ημερας η πρωτη σοφια και η γνωσις ημας ελλαμπεται. *Ibid. VI. p. 810. Ibid.* (P.)

The anonymous writer last quoted, after having "examined all the authorities brought by Lord King, which Dr. Watts thought it sufficient to epitomise, [*Works*, III. p. 142,] after perusing Dr. Young, Mr. Baxter, M. Placette, and Dr. Wright," thus appreciates the amount of the testimony on the question in debate:

"The quotation from *Barnabas*, how ancient soever the epistle may be, is much too obscure to instruct us in a doubtful or momentous point; nor does it hint at any divine or apostolic authority. The fair meaning, I confess, appears to me, that the day of Christ's resurrection must ever be reviewed with pleasure by every good Christian. That of *Ignatius*, every man of candour will allow, involved in still greater obscurity, if we are to suppose him speaking of the Lord's day. *Justin Martyr* writes with a precision that admits of no doubt of a meeting of Christians on Sunday. But while he gives no other reason for their fixing on this day, than because on it God began the creation, and Christ arose from the dead, he adduces the authority of scripture for their opinions of the eucharist, which no torture of

We cannot collect with exactness how much time the primitive Christians spent in public worship. But it should seem that it could not be less, but rather more than we usually employ in it. According to the excellent author of the *Enquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church*, "they usually preached an hour." The lessons were also of considerable length. That which was the subject of *Origen's* homily on *Jeremiah*, reached from chap. xv. 10, to xvii. 5, and another was from 1 *Sam.* xxv.—xxviii.*

"Their psalms," *Bingham* says, "were lengthened to an indefinite number, between every one of which they had liberty to meditate, and fall to their private prayers, which Stillingfleet thought had always a place in their service."† "They met," he says, "at three o'clock, or our nine in the morning."‡ It is evident from *Cyprian*, that they had service both in the morning and the evening; in the morning in commemoration of the resurrection, and in the evening to partake of the Lord's Supper.§

I have not quoted any later writers, as *Eubulus* would not allow them to be of sufficient authority; though when there is no trace of any difference in opinion or practice, among so many discordant sects as Christians were soon divided into, it may be presumed that what we find to be the universal opinion or practice of a later period, was also that of a former one. I shall, therefore, only just mention what *Austin* says of the Lord's day. "It is, therefore," he says, "called the Lord's day, because in it, abstaining from all earthly labours, and the allurements of the world, we

language can make other than that of elements transmuted by prayer and thanksgiving, (Εκείνη τῇ σαρκοποιηθέντος Ἰησοῦ καὶ σὰρκα καὶ αἷμα ἐδιδάχθημεν εἶναι,) and this in the sentence immediately preceding his account of Sunday. *Clemens Alexandrinus* speaks of the stationary and the Lord's days, in nearly the same language, and considers living a good life as keeping them all. *Tertullian*, amidst all the fasting, watching, and other absurdities of the Montanists, esteemed Sunday as a day on which he was to enjoy himself; and all these rites he speaks of with equal authority." *Letter to the Author of Thoughts*, &c. pp. 72—74.

* *Lord King's Enquiry*, Pt. ii. p. 13. (P.) "Origen complains of his abundance of matter, that if he should thoroughly handle every part of it, 'it would require not only the one hour of their assembly, but several.' Therefore when the Lessons were long and copious, which sometimes consisted of several chapters, the preacher passed over some of the matter unmentioned, and handled the most important, or the most curious part therein. Thus in the beginning of a sermon of *Origen's*, we find, that the chapters that were read, were the 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th chapters of the first book of *Samuel*, 'which,' he complains, 'were too large and copious to be all handled at once, and therefore he would only discourse of the 28th chapter, touching the *Witch of Endor*, and those things related there concerning her.'" *Ibid.*

† *Christ. Antiq.* II. p. 87. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 88. (P.)

§ "Nos autem resurrectionem Domini mane celebramus. Christum offerre oportebat circa vespervam diei." *Cyprian, Epist.* lxiii. p. 156. (P.)

employ it only in divine worship.”* In the *Apostolical Constitutions* also, directions are given to assemble continually on the Lord’s day, *συνερχεσθε ἀδιαλείπτως*.†

Besides the public worship of the Lord’s day, the *love-feasts* of the primitive Christians were also held on the same day, and generally in the evening, as may be inferred from the famous letter of *Pliny*, in which he says, “The Christians meet on a certain day to sing hymns to Christ, as a God, and lay themselves under a solemn obligation not to commit any wickedness, &c.; then they depart, and meet again to partake of an entertainment very innocent, and common to all.”‡ *Tertullian* speaks of this love-feast as *a supper*, a little before night; and in the three first centuries, *Bingham* says, it was held in the churches.§ According to these accounts, the Christians of the three first centuries must have spent a very great part of every Sunday in their churches.

What is here said relates to times of peace, in which Christians were at liberty to spend their Sundays as they pleased. In seasons of persecution, the public assemblies of Christians would, no doubt, be much interrupted, discontinued, or be held by night. But there could be no occasion to do this in any place out of Judea till the reign of *Nero*, because Christians were not persecuted by the Romans till that time.|| Consequently, their first customs would be fixed very early, in the age of the apostles; and they would be the same to which they would revert, when, after a season of persecution, peaceable times should return. The latter, therefore, are an indication of the former.

All, therefore, that could be meant by the primitive Christians when they said that they kept no *sabbaths*, must, if we judge by their practice, have been either that they did not observe the Jewish sabbath of the seventh day, or

* “Ideo Dominicus appellatur, ut in eo à terrenis operibus vel mundi illecebris abstinentes, tantum divinis cultibus serviamus.” *Aug. Civit. Dei*, L. xxii. C. xxx.; *Pearson on the Creed*, p. 266. (P.)

† Lib. vii. Cap. xxx. (P.)

‡ “Affirmabant—quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem: seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent: quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen, et innoxium. Lib. x. Ep. xcvii.” *Lardner*, VII. p. 292.

§ “Which account,” adds *Lardner*, “is much to the honour of these Christians. Their religion did not lie in abstruse speculations, or numerous rites and ceremonies, but in the worship of the one God, through Jesus Christ, and the practice of moral virtue.” *Ibid.* p. 341.

|| *Christ. Antiq.* II. p. 252. (P.)

|| See Vol. VIII. p. 79.

that, as on other festival days, they did not hold themselves absolutely obliged to refrain from labour on Sundays; and in climates in which the weather was uncertain, they would, probably, work in the fields in time of harvest. Indeed, I see no good reason why we should scruple to do this;* as work of this kind comes under the description of *work of necessity*, as much as the lifting up an ox or an ass that should fall into a pit on the sabbath day, which the most rigid of the Jews themselves allowed. In Judea, the seasons and the changes of weather are regular, so that no inconvenience would arise from a constant resting every seventh day.

That *Constantine* intended an absolute cessation from all labour on the Sunday, is not probable, since his order respected *Friday*,† as much as *Sunday*; and two days in a

* The following quotation from a paper which I had occasion to write in 1819, under the signature of *Dominicus*, will serve to shew that Dr. Priestley's liberal views of the occupation of *Sunday* had been anticipated by the *Reformers* in the 16th century:

"Those who governed England, and determined upon a religion for the people, in the name of the royal child Edward, procured an Act of Parliament in 1552, which described as *holy-days* 'all *Sundays* in the year, the days of the Feast of the *Circumcision*, *Epiphany*,' &c. It was farther enacted, 'that it shall be lawful to every husbandman, labourer, fisherman, and to all and every other person and persons, of what estate, degree or condition he or they be, upon the holy-days aforesaid, in harvest or at any other time in the year, when necessity shall require, to labour, ride, fish, or work any kind of work, at their free wills and pleasure.'

"Five years before, in 1547, *Injunctions* had been put forth, in the name of Edward, 'that all parsons, vicars and curates shall teach and declare unto their parishioners, that they may with a safe and quiet conscience, in the time of harvest, labour upon the holy and festival days, and save that thing which God hath sent. And if, for any scrupulosity or grudge of conscience, men should superstitiously abstain from working upon those days, that they should grievously offend and displease God.' These directions were adopted by Elizabeth in 1559, adding to the words *quiet conscience*, 'after their common prayer.'

"These authorities are quoted from *Des Maizeaux's* Life of Chillingworth, pp. 83, 84, in a note to a passage on Chillingworth's refusal of Subscription. Among his objections, one 'concerned the fourth commandment,' which 'appeared to him to be made a part of the Christian law. And this he found contrary to the sense of the Church of England, concerning that holy-day of the Christians which is called Sunday.'" *Mon. Repos.* XIV. pp. 555, 556.

† Διὸ τοῖς ὑπὸ Ρωμαιοῦν ἀρχὴν πολιτευομένοις ἀπασὶ σχολῇν ἀγεῖν ταῖς ἐπ' αὐτοῖς τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμεραις ἐνθ' ἔτετι ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὴν πρὸ τῆς σαββάτου τιμᾶν. For such it is acknowledged was the original reading, and not τὰς τῆς σαββάτου. (*P.*)

Mr. Evanson, on the authority of the following "Order of Constantine itself," contends that it had not the least respect to Friday.

"Omnes judices urbanæque plebes et cunctarum artium officia venerabili die solis quiescant. Ruri tamen positi agrorum culturæ libere licenterque inserviant, quoniam frequenter evenit, ut non aptius alio die frumenta sulcis aut vineæ scrobibus mandentur, ne occasione momenti pereat commoditas cælesti provisione concessa." *Dat. Nonis Mart. Crispo* 11, et *Constantino* 11, *Conss. Corp. Jur. Civ. Codicis*, L. iii. Tit. xii."

"'Let all judges,' says the Emperor's edict, 'and towns-people, and the occupations of all trades rest on the venerable day of the sun. But let those who are situated in the country, freely, and at full liberty, attend to the business of agri-

week would certainly have been thought too much to abstain from labour. Besides, it is well known that the Christians respected the Jewish sabbath, though not in so high a degree as the Lord's day, and had assemblies in the churches on that day.*

I would observe, however, that *Eubulus* is mistaken in asserting, that "with the Jews not only all business and travelling, but all social and pleasurable intercourse with each other was prohibited; and each family was in a manner circumscribed within its own dwelling, except during the hours of attendance at the temple, or in the synagogue."† No such precept as this is found in Moses, and the Jews, in all ages, generally made choice of the sabbath in preference to all other days for their social entertainments. "On the sabbath," says *Reland*, "they put on their best clothes, in honour of it, and use every expression of joy, especially in feasting and indulging themselves as well as they can afford."‡

I am the more surprised that *Eubulus* should imagine the Jews spent their sabbaths in this recluse and rigid manner, when it appears from *Luke* xiv. 1, &c., that Jesus was invited to what may well be called *a feast*, at the house of

culture; because it often happens, that no other day is so fit for sowing corn, or planting vines, lest, the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted them by the providence of heaven."

Mr. Evanson adds, "Upon this imperial order, which is the first authoritative institution of a sabbatical observance of Sunday, I must beg leave to remark, that the partial manner in which Constantine enjoins a cessation from their ordinary business upon his subjects, demonstrates that he knew of no previous ordinance of such an observance derived from the apostles of Christ: for that, like all other ordinances of the gospel, must have been equally obligatory on all Christians whatsoever; and, therefore, he could have had no more right, in that case, to have remitted the observance to his country subjects from motives of good policy, than any ruler of the Jews had to dispense with the obligation of the fourth commandment of the Mosaic law in favour of the Jewish husbandmen." See "Arguments against and for the Sabbatical Observance of Sunday, by a cessation from all Labour," 1792, pp. 139, 140.

* "The eastern churches, in compliance with the Jewish converts, who were numerous in those parts, performed on the seventh day the same public religious services that they did on the first day, observing both the one and the other as a festival. Whence *Origen* (*Παρασκευαίαν*, *Contra Cels.* l. viii. p. 393) enumerates *Saturday* as one of the four feasts solemnized in his time; though, on the contrary, some of the western churches, that they might not seem to Judaize, fasted on *Saturday*, as *Victorinus Petavionensis* (*De Fabric. Mun. apud D. Cave*, p. 103) writes, 'We use to fast on the seventh day.' And, 'It is our custom then to fast, that we may not seem with the Jews to observe the sabbath.' So that besides the Lord's day, *Saturday* was an usual season whereon many churches solemnized their religious services." Lord King's *Enquiry*, Pt. ii. pp. 126, 127.

† *Theol. Repos.* V. p. 256. (P.)

‡ "Porro in ipso sabbatho requiritur indutio vestium pretiosarum, in honorem sabbathi, et summa lætitia, cujus plurima signa edunt, epulando et indulgendo genio, quantum res unius cujusque patitur." *Antiquitates Sacre*, Pt. iv. C. viii. Sect. x. p. 300. (P.)

one of the chief Pharisees, on the sabbath-day. That the company on this occasion was large, it is evident from their *choosing out the chief rooms*; and that it consisted chiefly of persons of distinction, is probable, from its giving our Lord occasion to advise his host, that when he made a feast, he would not invite his *friends and rich neighbours*, &c., which seems to imply that he had then done so.

The Christians of *Tertullian's* time were far from spending the *Sunday* in the rigid and gloomy manner in which it was observed by the old *Puritans*. * "It is said," says he, "let your works shine, and now our shops and gates shine. For you will find more doors without lights and laurels among Heathens than among Christians." † And this book was written when he was a *Montanist*, the most rigid of all the sects of Christians.

Hilary says, "We on the eighth day, which is also the first, rejoice in the festivity of a perfect sabbath." ‡ It is evident, however, that the *Sunday* festivity of the primitive

* It is remarkable, as I had occasion to notice in another place, that the restraints on the occupation of *Sunday*, "introduced into Britain by the Puritans, had been enforced by our Saxon ancestors.

"In 'An Historical Discourse of the Uniformity of the Government of England,' 1647, written by Nathaniel Bacon, a learned lawyer, he says, (p. 98,) in praise of the *Saxons*, 'Because they would not allow their secular affairs to trench too nigh that day's devotion, they made the Lord's day to begin upon Saturday, at three o'clock in the afternoon, and to continue till Monday morning. No pastime, not their beloved sport of hunting, was allowed during all that time: nor no works were to be done, but such as concerned the worship of God: and those laws they bound with penalty of fine, if the delinquent were a freeman; if he were a bond servant, he was to be whipped. Nor were these the laws of one king or age only, but of the whole current of the Saxon government.' For this representation my author refers to *Concil. Brit.* It is remarkable that those who appear to have introduced into Britain this *Judaical*, or rather *Ultra-judaical* Lord's day, should have been in religious knowledge and deportment so different from its restorers in the sixteenth century. N. Bacon had just before remarked, (p. 97,) "that the *Saxons* took no note of the vice of profane swearing and cursing; which crime," he says, "must lie upon the clergymen's account, for their neglect of teaching the point, or upon the general ignorance of those times, which understood not the [third] commandment nor the Scripture." *Mon. Repos.* XIV. pp. 555, 556.

† "Sed luceant inquit opera vestra. At nunc luceant tabernæ et januæ nostræ. Plures jam invenies Ethnicorum fores sine lucernis et laureis, quam Christianorum." *De Idol.* C. xv. p. 94. (P.) For this incomplete quotation Dr. Priestley is censured by Mr. Evanson, who adds the words of *Tertullian* immediately following: "De ista quoque specie quid videtur? Si idoli honor est, sine dubio idoli honor idololatria est."

"*Tertullian*," says Mr. Evanson, "is not talking of the manner in which the Christians of his time spent the Sunday; but is pointedly arraigning them of the guilt of idolatry, for partaking of the feasts made by their Pagan friends, in honour of their false gods, and for adopting the very rites in use amongst the Heathen, as *insignia* of the celebration of their idolatrous festivals." *Arguments*, pp. 141, 142. See Dr. Priestley, *infra*, p. 349.

‡ "Nos in octava die, quæ et ipsa prima est, perfecti sabbati festivitate lætamur." *Prologus in Psalmorum Explanationem, Opera*, p. 637. (P.)

Christians did not consist in sports, but in singing psalms, and other expressions of religious joy, or in cheerful society.

What were the practices of the Christians in the times of the apostles, may be pretty safely inferred from those of the times that immediately succeeded them, since we have no account of any difference between them. Besides, the apostles, and all the Jewish Christians, having been used to a weekly day of public worship, and having, no doubt, experienced the benefit of it, would naturally continue the same custom when they became Christians, and recommend the same to the Gentile converts. Indeed, it is most evident, and allowed by all, that the customs respecting the Jewish synagogues were kept up in Christian churches, the former having been, in all respects, a model for the latter.

But, independently of these strong *presumptions*, from practices both prior and subsequent to those of the *apostolic* age, there appear to me to be sufficient marks of regular assemblies being held by Christians, in the books of the *New Testament*, and also of those assemblies being held on the first day of the week.

As this day was unquestionably in after times called *the Lord's day*, it may safely be concluded to be the same that was intended by the same term in the book of *Revelation*. * For Christians, who made so much use of the books of the *New Testament*, would never use words in senses different from those in which they apprehended them to be used there. This day, therefore, had, even in the age of the apostles, acquired a peculiar appellation, and was, in the customary forms of speech, distinguished from all the other days of the week; and the probability will be that, along with the same *name*, the early Christians received from the apostles the *customs* peculiar to that day, and such as have been recited from their writings.

But there is not wanting, in my opinion, the clearest evidence in the books of the *New Testament* themselves, that all the Christians in such large cities as *Corinth* and *Ephesus* assembled for public worship at mid-day, and that these assemblies were held on the *Lord's day*. This is more particularly evident from the Epistles of *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, whose public assemblies required much regulation. In them he distinguishes the church, from private houses, as was mentioned before, † 1 *Cor.* xi. 22. He speaks of the

* *Ch.* i. 10. See Vol. XIV. p. 446.

† *Supra*, p. 331.

whole church coming together into one place, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 23—26, and again, 1 *Cor.* xi. 18. In these churches, or public assemblies, women were to keep silence, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 34, 35, and strangers were frequently present, so as often to be converted by what they heard or saw in them. *Vers.* 23—25: “If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.” It appears also from the Epistle of *James*, (ii. 2, 3,) that strangers frequently attended the public assemblies of Christians: “If there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man, in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here, in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool,” &c.

What do these circumstances give us an idea of, but of such promiscuous assemblies as are now held by Christians in all countries, and in mid-day, to which any strangers that choose it may resort? What were churches in private houses (1 *Cor.* xvi. 19, *Col.* iv. 15) but assemblies of Christians held there, independent of the proper members of such houses? And where were Epistles to whole churches read but in such assemblies, as in the church of Laodicea? *Col.* iv. 16. * That these assemblies were held frequently and regularly, appears from several circumstances. Their being attended by strangers sufficiently implies it. For how could such persons know of private, or only occasional assemblies? In *Acts* xi. 26, we read of *Paul* and *Barnabas* assembling “themselves a whole year with the church, and *teaching* much people.” What could this be but attending regular assemblies of the whole church in that populous city, where the Christians were numerous in a very early period?

If these assemblies were *weekly*, there can hardly be any doubt but that they were held on *the Lord's day*; and notwithstanding what has been urged by *Eubulus* on this head, I cannot help thinking it very evident, that this was the case both at *Corinth* and at *Troas*.

* See Vol. XIV. p. 341.

With respect to the former, though the apostle speaks of the money to be collected (1 *Cor.* xvi. 2) as laid up by individuals, “upon the first day of the week;” I cannot help thinking, with Mr. Locke, that it was also on that day to be deposited in some one hand, or place; * because otherwise it would not have answered his purpose, in preventing all gatherings when he should come. Could he mean to intimate that they should every week, and on the first day of the week in particular, put into a private purse in their own houses whatever they intended for this charity, lest it should get mixed with their other money, and afterwards they might not be able or willing to separate it? This, surely, was too trifling, and arguing an unworthy distrust of their liberality. Besides, is not the unquestionable fact of all similar collections of money in after times being made in churches, and on the Lord’s day, a sufficient evidence that the practice began in the times of the apostles? Indeed, why should the apostle mention “the first day of the week” on this occasion, if it was not the time of their public assemblies?

I have particularly considered all that *Eubulus* has advanced in support of his opinion, that *Paul* preached at *Troas* on the evening, before the *Lord’s day*, and not on the evening of that day, and think it evident that his conclusion is ill-founded. It appears from *Acts* xx. 6, that at this time *Paul* spent “seven days” in *Troas*. Why then should he preach to them on the first day of the week, if it had not been the time of their usual assemblies? He had his choice of all the seven days; but probably the wind not being favourable for sailing, he did not choose to call the church together before their usual time of meeting, and before that, went from house to house.

Eubulus lays much stress on the Jews beginning the day on the evening. But, as Dr. Lardner says in his “Observations upon Dr. Macknight’s Harmony,” (in which he shews that the women went to embalm the body of Jesus on the morning of the first day of the week, and not on the evening of the seventh, though that morning, just before sun-rise, is said, *Matt.* xxviii. 1, to be “the end of the sabbath,”) “All know very well that the Jewish civil day, or *νυχθήμερον*, began at the setting of the sun; but that day was divided into two parts, *night* and *day*; by *day* meaning the natural day, or that part of the civil day which is light.”†

* “Put into the common treasury of the Church.” See his *Paraphrase* and *Notes*.
 † *Lardner*, XI. p. 365.

To use the term *day* for *day-light* was as customary with the Jews as it is with us. Thus, *Luke* says, (xxii. 66,) "As soon as it was day, the elders of the people,—led *Jesus* into their council," though according to *Eubulus*, the Jewish day was then half expired; and all the preceding transactions (of the same day, according to him) are said to be done *on the evening* and the *night*, as if they belonged to the preceding day; just as we should now speak. So also *Ezra* is said (*Neh.* viii. 3) to have read in the book of the law "from the morning until mid-day," though, according to *Eubulus*, their *mid-day* was passed about the time of his beginning to read. Also the term *next day* is used in opposition to the evening before, though, according to him, it was a part of the same day. *Acts* iv. 3: "They put them in hold unto the next day, for it was now even-tide." And yet *Eubulus* refers to this passage as in his favour.*

I have no doubt, therefore, but that when we read, *Acts* xx. 7, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, *Paul* preached unto them, (ready to depart on the morrow,) † and continued his speech until midnight," the assembly began in the day-light of the Sunday, and that the *next day* was the *Monday* following; especially as there was then no persecution of Christians, to induce them to hold their assemblies in the dark. I shall conclude with a few observations of a more general nature, but I shall not enlarge upon them.

1. If the appropriation of one day in seven for the purpose of public worship was the practice of the apostles, we may conclude that it is not hurtful, but useful. And though we *Gentile* Christians are not bound by the *Jewish* ritual, we may safely infer, that if the sabbath, as observed by the Jews, necessarily led to evil, it would not have been appointed by God for them. And from its not being hurtful to *them*, we may safely infer that it cannot be so to *us*, since human nature is the same. That this observance was prevented from being hurtful to the Jews by any peculiar restrictions with respect to social intercourse, I have shewn to be a misapprehension of *Eubulus*.

2. In my opinion the cessation from labour on the Lord's

* *Theol. Repos.* VI. p. 368. (P.)

† "It seems highly probable, that St. Paul partook of, and perhaps, from his sacred character, presided at one of these charity suppers, (which afterwards, when the custom of living in common became less necessary, acquired the name of love-feasts; and which were, at one time, the great ornament of the Christian religion,) to take his leave of the disciples, the night before his departure from Troas." *Letter to the Author of Thoughts*, &c. pp. 45, 46.

day makes a pleasing and useful distinction in our time ; and, besides its excellent religious and moral uses, greatly contributes to the civilization of mankind. The expectation of it relieves the labour of all the preceding six days ; and consequently that labour is done better with this interval than it would have been without it, to say nothing of the relief that it affords the labouring cattle.

3. Besides, I cannot help thinking that in this country the manufacturers labour to excess ; and that it would be very desirable, would contribute to lengthen their lives, and make their lives much happier, if their labours could be moderated. The riches of this nation are procured by the premature exhausting of the strength and vital powers of the greater part of our manufacturers ; though it is not denied that the intemperance of many of them contributes to the same effect. Like our horses, their lives are shortened and made wretched, by fatigue.

4. If the *laws* did not provide intervals of rest from labour, the labourers themselves would not fail to do it ; and the intervals of their own providing would have a worse effect than the present. Our annual feasts, in every town and village in the kingdom, are far more mischievous than *Sunday* spent in the worst manner. For no ideas of religion being now annexed to them, licentiousness has no restraint.

5. If it were left to every individual to choose his own time for public worship and instruction, (if such a custom could be called *public*,) many would greatly abridge, and many would neglect it altogether ; as we see to be the case with family worship, even where the obligation and use of it are acknowledged. The consequence would be, that secular concerns would engross their whole time, and the very appearance and profession of Christianity would be in danger of disappearing among us. But on such topics as these I forbear to enlarge, as it has been done sufficiently by *Phlander** and *Subsidiarius*.†

That much evil arises from the manner in which *Sunday* is now spent by many, both of the lower and higher ranks in the community, cannot be denied ; but I hope it is not without a remedy, and I am fully persuaded that the abolition of the observance of Sunday would be attended with much greater evil.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours, &c. &c.

HERMAS.

* *Theol. Repos.* VI. pp. 113—116.

† *Ibid.* pp. 342, 343.

*Remarks on Mr. Evanson's Letter on the Observance of the Lord's Day. **

MR. EVANSON is far from denying the *expediency* or *propriety* of public worship, or the use of *public instruction*; so that he differs very materially from Mr. Wakefield. But he would not have the *Lord's day* set apart for these purposes, and is of opinion, that this institution has no sanction, either in the practice of the apostles, or that of any Christians, till the third century.

That the public assemblies of Christians were, however, from the times of the apostles, held on the *Lord's day*, and that a considerable part of this day was always devoted to the business of those assemblies, appears to me to be so evident, from the authorities produced by me before, † and especially that of *Justin Martyr*, that I do not think it necessary to argue the matter at large any farther. Let our readers fairly compare what each of us has written, and then judge between us. I do not see why Mr. Evanson should write with so much apparent peevishness on this subject, if he did not himself, in some measure, feel the force of my reasoning upon it; nor why a question of this nature cannot be discussed by any Christian, with the perfect calmness and good humour of which I set him an example.

It was particularly unworthy of a scholar and a gentleman, to observe, as Mr. Evanson does, ‡ that in quoting a passage of *Ignatius*, which I gave at length in the margin, I omitted to translate a particular clause in it relating to the *dignity of Christ*; § because it was unfavourable to my principles as an *Unitarian*, though it had nothing at all to do with the question that I was then discussing. He calls my conduct in this case, “a prudent caution, considering *my* avowed religious principles, and that *I was* quoting his authority to prove what was the religion of the apostolic age.” But what is this to the purpose, unless the question between us had been concerning this particular article of religion, and on this we had no difference; Mr. Evanson being an *Unitarian* as much as myself?

That I should trouble my reader with a translation of

* “Letter to the Rev. Dr. Priestley,” annexed to the *Arguments*, 1792, pp. 121—175.

† *Supra*, pp. 332—334.

‡ *Arguments*, p. 146, Note. (P.)

§ “One Jesus Christ, than whom there is nothing greater.” *Ibid*.

more of the passage than I had occasion for, I do not see. That Mr. Evanson should insinuate that there was any unfairness in my conduct on this occasion, I am concerned to see, not on my own account, but on his. That, as a defender of *Unitarianism*, I am not afraid of any quotation from *Ignatius*, has sufficiently appeared by my writings on the subject ; and on this head, I doubt not, Mr. Evanson himself is well satisfied.

Though I shall not go over the whole field of argument with Mr. Evanson, I shall briefly reply to any remark of his that has the appearance of being new.

Not being able to deny that the officers in the Christian church, in the age of the apostles, received some consideration in temporals for their labour in spirituals, he says, whatever that might be, "I find not the slightest reason to believe, that any *resident preacher* of the Gospel was maintained as such, at the expense of his fellow-christians, before the latter half of the third century, when corruptions multiplied apace, and the fatal predicted apostacy was advancing with large and hasty strides." *

Now, not to insist on the case of *Timothy*, who appears to have devoted his whole time to the work of the ministry, and therefore to have had a just claim to a full maintenance ; and that, for any thing that appears, there would be the same occasion for other persons doing the same service, and receiving the same recompence, in other places ; I would observe in general, that the want of writings immediately after the time of the apostles, makes it difficult to prove the existence of any practice among Christians in that period by positive evidence : but that an universally acknowledged practice (among all the discordant sects into which Christians were then divided) in a later period, without any hint, or visible cause, of a change, is a strong presumptive evidence that the practice existed from the beginning. The objectors should say, *when*, and *by whom*, or from what particular *cause* the supposed innovation arose. Who was it that persuaded all the sects of Christians, who had not before been used to have any public instruction, to appoint orders of men unknown to the apostles, and give them salaries out of the fruits of their own labour, when before this time, whatever of this kind had been done, had been performed gratuitously ? Such changes as these require to be accounted for in a more satisfactory manner than by saying they arose from mere

* *Arguments*, p. 127. (P.)

superstition or *priestcraft*. If these things did operate as *causes*, what were the circumstances which favoured their operation?

I shall now come to Mr. Evanson's more particular authorities, or rather to his objections to mine. He complains of my translation of a passage in *Ignatius*,* in which he is represented as recommending the observance of the *Lord's day* in preference to that of the *Jewish sabbath*. That translation I took without suspicion from Archbishop Wake; but upon examination, I am satisfied that Mr. Evanson had no reason to complain of it.

"No longer observing sabbaths, but keeping the Lord's-day, in which also our life is sprung up by him." That the word ζωην, *life*, which is omitted in the old Latin version, is a spurious reading, for ἡμεραν, *a day*, expressed or understood, is evident from the reference to it in the following relative; viz. in *which*, that is, "*in which day* our life is sprung up by him," which makes good sense; but the phrase, "the Lord's life, in which life our life sprung up," is not so.

Mr. Evanson says, † that ζωντες κατὰ signifies "living according to," which I do not deny, and that, "if the phrase 'living according to the Lord's day' has any meaning, it is evidently beyond *his* comprehension." I do not pretend to vindicate the strict propriety of this Greek phrase, nor that of many others, especially those that are found in authors not classical; but the word *day* is not the less necessary to a consistent sense of the passage. If the word *life* be the true reading, it ought at least to have been followed by *in whose life*, not by *in which life*.

If we may be allowed to interpret the lesser epistles of *Ignatius* by the larger, interpolated ones, this sense will be much more evident; for in them the corresponding passage is as follows:

"Let us no longer keep the sabbath after the Jewish manner, rejoicing in idleness; for he that doth not work should not eat, and the Scripture saith, 'In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread;' but let each of you keep the Sabbath spiritually, rejoicing in meditation on the law; not in the rest of the body, but admiring the workmanship of God; not eating things prepared the day before, drinking cold liquors, walking a measured space, and rejoicing in dancings and noisy, senseless diversions; but after the sabbath let every lover of Christ make a festival of the Lord's

* *Supra*, p. 332.

† *Arguments*, p. 131.

day, on which he rose from the dead, the queen, the greatest of all days, in which our life arose." *

Mr. Evanson says, that he sees nothing in the account that Justin Martyr gives of the business done in Christian churches on the Lord's day, that could "be reasonably supposed to have usually taken up more than an hour and a half at the utmost." † But our Sunday services at present do not in general employ more time, in either part of the day; and *Justin* might think it sufficient to mention what was done in one part, especially that in which the Lord's supper was administered, as that would comprise every thing that was done in Christian assemblies, concerning which he wished to give his readers satisfaction.

Mr. Evanson also says, that contrary to my conclusion, (viz. that the assembly described by Justin Martyr was held in *mid-day*,) "the circumstance" of the administration "of the *Lord's supper* very clearly ascertains the time of holding it to have been in the evening. For," he adds, "from St. Paul's Epistles, Pliny's Letter, and even from the passage you yourself have quoted from that father of the Romish church, Cyprian, it is evident, that during the three first centuries, the evening was the only time of celebrating the Eucharist, or Lord's supper. Such a meeting, therefore, could not at all interfere with the usual business of the day." ‡ But Mr. Evanson needs not to be informed that the Jewish *evening service* was at our three in the afternoon, and that the service of this time of the day is still, in imitation, no doubt, of more ancient times, called *the evening service*.

Mr. Evanson quotes *Clemens Alexandrinus*, as condemning the setting apart of any particular time for the purpose of public worship, when he says, "We are commanded to worship God through Jesus Christ, *not on chosen days*, as some others do, but continually, through our whole life.—Wherefore a well-informed Christian worships God, not in any stated place, nor chosen temple, nor on any *festivals and appointed days*, but through his whole life, in every place,

* Μηκετιν σαββατιζωμεν Ιουδαϊκως, και αργιας χαιροντες· ο μη εργαζομεν· γαρ, μη εσθιετω; εν ιδρωτι γαρ τε προσωπη σε φαγη τον αρτον σε, φασι τα λογια· αλλ' ενας· υμων σαββατιζετω πνευματικως, μελετη νομου χαιρων, οι σωματ· ανεσει, δημιουργιαν Θεο θαιμαζων, ουκ εωλα εσθιων, και χλιαρα πινων, και μεμετρημενα βαδιζων, και ορχησει και κροτοις νουν ουκ εχουσι χαιρων· και μετα τω σαββατισαι, εορταζετω πας φιλοχρισ· την κυριακην, την αναστασιν, την βασιλιδα, την υπαδον πασων των ημερων· εν η και η ζωη ημων ανετειλε. Id. interp. Sect. ix. p. 56. (P.)

† *Arguments*, p. 132. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 134, 135. (P.)

whether he chance to be alone, or in company with other believers."* But, besides observing that this writer makes no mention of the *Lord's day*, but only of *festivals* and *appointed days* in general, to interpret what he here says in consistency with what he says elsewhere, of "all true Christians observing the Lord's day, and therein glorifying the resurrection of Christ on that day;"† he could only mean that Christians do not confine their worship to that day.

This day was certainly never considered by the early Christians as a *sabbath*, or a day of necessary rest from labour; but it was deemed *sacred*, and was soon celebrated as *festival* days were; and whether the custom, adopted by *Christians* in imitation of the *Heathens*, of ornamenting their houses, as a token of festivity on that day, was approved or disapproved by *Tertullian*, (on which Mr. Evanson lays so much stress,)‡ makes no difference in my argument, since the practice shews that this day was by them distinguished from other days. He might condemn the *manner* in which it was done; but it is sufficiently evident, from the passage I have quoted from this writer, that he did not disapprove the thing itself. What reason, then, had I for quoting him, as Mr. Evanson more than insinuates, *unfairly* for this purpose?

I agree entirely with Mr. Evanson that civil governors ought not to interfere in this business, which, as it relates to *religion*, is out of their proper province. Let no man be compelled to observe the *Lord's day* in any manner that he does not himself choose; but let every man be left at perfect liberty to work or rest as he pleases; and in my opinion harvest work ought not to be neglected on that day, in so uncertain a climate as ours. Were I a minister in a country place, where the chief dependence of my congregation should be upon farming, I would choose to have public worship early in the morning, and late in the evening, and exhort my hearers to make the most of the middle part of the day, in taking care of their hay and their corn.§ But I would not give

* *Arguments*, pp. 152, 153. (P.)

† *Supra*, p. 334.

‡ *Arguments*, p. 141. (P.) See *supra*, p. 339, Note †.

§ On this passage Mr. Evanson remarks, "that whatever right farmers have to break through the customary sabbatical rest in one season of the year, for their peculiar profit or convenience, the very same right have they and every order of men, to employ the leisure hours of Sunday for similar purposes in every season of the year." Mr. E. adds, that "were the observance of a sabbath among Christians an ordinance of the Christian religion, no man could have the authority to *violate* or *dispense* with it on any occasion." See "A Letter to Dr. Priestley's Young Man," 1794, p. 2. See *supra*, p. 337.

up the idea of the *sanctity* of that day, in some proper sense of the word, or the appropriation of a considerable part of it to the purposes of public instruction and public worship.

If I may judge from my own experience, much more time is necessary to teach and to inculcate the principles of Christianity, than Mr. Evanson supposes. The mere *teaching* indeed, if that be confined to the elements of Christianity, might, no doubt, be dispatched, as he says, in an hour; but repeated impressions are necessary to form and to strengthen religious habits; and the business of the world is such, that if the views of Christianity were not frequently presented to the mind, we should soon lose sight of them entirely, and become as worldly-minded as those who never heard of Christianity. Hence the necessity of repeated exhortation. And as the knowledge of what directly or indirectly relates to religion may well employ a Christian minister the whole week, so the communication of what he may judge to be useful to his hearers may well employ a considerable part of one day in it.

Mr. Evanson, in answer to what I observed* of the collection for the poor *Jewish Christians* being made in the church of *Corinth* every *Lord's day*, in order to prevent the necessity of any collection being made when he should himself visit them, says that *παρ' ἑαυτῶν*, must imply that the money was kept in the benefactor's own custody, and not deposited in any common fund. This I own to be the usual sense of the Greek phrase; but, as the purpose for which *Paul* wrote could not have been answered by this method, and such collections, whenever they are mentioned in later times, were made on that day, I rather think, either that the apostle did not express himself accurately, or that the common is not the universal sense of the phrase. Yet Mr. Evanson says, "I would as soon mispend my time in attempting to prove that the sun shone at noon to a person who should persist in affirming it to be then midnight darkness,"† as to contend with me for maintaining what I have done with respect to this circumstance.‡ Very little, however, depends upon this passage with regard to our main argument; § and Mr. Evan-

* *Supra*, p. 342.

† *Arguments*, pp. 155, 156. (P.)

‡ Mr. Evanson's words are: "As I would contend with any one who will assert, that an express precept for a man to lay by money *in his own custody*, signifies that he should deposit it *in the custody of another person*." *Ibid.* p. 156.

§ On this passage it has been remarked by a writer before quoted, "It were much to be wished, that so pious a custom as a weekly meeting, not only to worship God, but to inquire into the wants of poor brethren, to take a repast in common, and to receive letters from different places under circumstances of distress, were

son's reasoning would have no less force, if it was unmixed with such contempt for that of his adversary.

If Mr. Evanson will take the pains to inform himself, he will find that, notwithstanding the rigorous abstinence of the *Jews* from all labour, and even from lighting a fire on the sabbath day, they always did, and still do, contrive to spend that day as a festival,* and that they make entertainments on it, in preference to other days. If he have not Reland's *Jewish Antiquities*, of which the late Riots have deprived me, so that I cannot have recourse to that author at present ; or, if he suspect, as he evidently does, that I did not quote him *fairly*, let him look into Buxtorf's *Synagoga Judaica*, in which he will find a very copious account of the Jewish method of entertaining themselves on the sabbath ; or if he make inquiry of any living Jew, he will find, that my former account was perfectly correct. *Cotelerius* in his note on the passage of Ignatius quoted above, says, *Certè in proverbium abiit sabbatarius luxus*; that is, " The luxury of the sabbath became proverbial."

As luxury implies excess, it is certainly not to be justified on any day ; but social and cheerful entertainments, such as are not improper on other days, are by no means inconsistent with the acts of religion required of the *Jews* on the *sabbath*, or of *Christians* on the *Lord's day*.†

continued to this day, instead of a superstitious observation, for which we have no Christian authority, which, from the name we have given it, and the source from which some of us derive it, we are absolutely forbidden to impose on our brethren, and which is either found irksome, or altogether neglected by many well-disposed Christians." *Letter to the Author of Thoughts*, &c. pp. 47, 48.

* See *ibid.* pp. 19—24. Mr. Evanson, however, quotes a contrary opinion from a modern Jew. *Letter*, 1794, p. 53. See *infra*.

† The first Discourse in *Watts's* " Holiness of Times, Places, and People," 1738, (noticed p. 334, Note §.) is entitled, " The Sabbath Perpetual and the Lord's Day Sacred." The following pious and liberal conclusion of that Discourse is well worthy of being here recorded :

" Since the observation of the *Lord's day* is not built upon any express and plain institution by Christ or his apostles in the New Testament, but rather on examples and probable inferences, and on the reasons and relations of things ; I can never pronounce any thing hard or severe upon any fellow-christian, who maintains real piety in heart and life, though his opinion may be very different from mine on this subject. Nor does any man, who is humbly and sincerely studious of truth and duty, and desirous to find it, deserve any reproach or censure upon the account of different opinions about meats and days ; unless he assume such haughty airs of assurance, as arise far beyond all his evidence and proof, or indulge a persecuting spirit, and reproach his brethren who differ from him.

" *Whatsoever we do in our distinct practices, on these dubious subjects, let us do it sincerely as to the Lord : if we regard a day, let us regard it to the Lord ; and if we neglect it for fear of superstition, let this also be with a desire to honour the Lord.* *Rom.* xiv. 6. Let religion be maintained in the life and power of it, by every one that names the name of Christ, and let him faithfully pursue those methods which, according to the clearest discoveries of reason and scripture, will be most successful to obtain this end." *Works*, III. p. 141.

LETTERS TO A YOUNG MAN,

PART II.

OCCASIONED BY

Mr. Evanson's Treatise

ON THE

DISSONANCE OF THE FOUR GENERALLY-RECEIVED
EVANGELISTS. *

—— Vultus erat multa et præclara minantis.
Dic aliquid dignum promissis.——

HORACE, L. ii. Sat. iii.



[London, 1793.]



PREFACE.

NOTHING was ever more unexpected by me than that I, or, indeed, that any other person, should, at this day, have occasion to enter into a discussion of the subject of these *Letters*; as nothing seemed to be better established than the authenticity of almost all the canonical books of the *New Testament*, no unbeliever having, of late years, hinted a suspicion to the contrary, and every reasonable doubt having been removed by such laborious and candid writers as Mr. Jones and Dr. Lardner, not to mention several others, whose works could not be unknown to Mr. Evanson. That such books were extant in, or very near to, the time in which the events recorded, or alluded to, in them happened, so that it was impossible but that the truth might be known with respect to them, there is abundantly more evidence than there is of any other historical books whatever having been written and published in the same circumstances.

* "And the Evidence of their respective Authenticity examined. By Edward Evanson, A.M." *Ipswich*, 1792. There was a second edition in 1805, of which the author corrected the *proof sheets*, "till within two days" of his death. See *Mon. Repos.* I. p. 60, *Note*.

Doubts, therefore, with respect to the authenticity of the books of the *New Testament* (I mean the universally-received ones, as the four *Gospels*, and the greater part of the *Epistles* ascribed to *Paul*) might just extend to all other writings whatever, and lead to universal scepticism.

By what particular train of thought Mr. Evanson was originally led to entertain the doubts which at length produced the work on which I here animadvert, does not appear. That it was, directly or indirectly, from any disbelief of Christianity, I have not the smallest suspicion. His noble conduct in resigning a valuable church preferment, * rather than recite the offices, after he had rejected the doctrines, of the Established Church, is an abundant proof both of his firm belief of Christianity, and of the happy influence it had upon his mind; unbelievers in general making no scruple to adhere to any church, so long as they can receive the emoluments of it. The cast of Mr. Evanson's writings also proves, not only that he is a Christian, but that Christian literature is his favourite study, all his publications being of this kind, intended to enforce and illustrate some article of Christian faith or practice.

But having given more particular attention to the subject of *prophecy*, to which we are indebted for his excellent *Letter to the Bishop of Worcester*, † he appears to me to have overlooked and undervalued the evidence of Christianity from *testimony*; not seeming to have considered the nature of it, and how it has actually operated in all ages, and must do, while human nature is the same that it now is, and ever has been. Also, not being able to vindicate, so well as he could wish, some particular passages in the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, and in some of the *Epistles of Paul*, which have been urged in support of doctrines and practices which he justly deems to be corruptions of genuine Christianity, he may have wished to find those books not to be genuine, as that would be the easiest way of getting rid of the difficulty; and, without considering the external evidence of their authenticity, and not having the critical skill or the patience that was requisite to ascertain the true sense of those passages, he has hastily concluded them to be spurious productions. In a state of mind which I have sup-

* "His Livings of Longdon and Tewkesbury," in 1778. See *M. Repos.* I. pp. 5, 6.

† "A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry [Hurd, afterwards of Worcester]; wherein the Importance of the Prophecies of the New Testament, and the Nature of the Grand Apostacy predicted in them, are particularly and impartially considered. By Edward Evanson, A. M." 1777. See *Appendix*, No. X.

posed, nothing is easier than to find objections to any writings; and when a man has, though ever so hastily and incautiously, advanced any thing in public, the best of us are so much *men*, and have so much of human imperfection about us, as to wish to defend it.

In this manner I endeavour to account for the work, the principles of which I have, in these Letters, undertaken to refute. In his excellent Letter on the subject of prophecy, Mr. Evanson first threw out an insinuation against the credit of the Gospel of *Matthew*,* which offended many of his friends, and the friends of Christianity. But he has given us all particular satisfaction in producing the reasons on which that insinuation was founded, as we can now examine them, and judge for ourselves; whereas many persons, having a high opinion of the judgment and integrity of Mr. Evanson, were inclined to suppose his reasons to be more weighty than they will find them to be.

The only circumstance that offends me in this work of Mr. Evanson's is, the levity and contempt with which he treats those books of the *New Testament* which he thinks he has seen reason to reject. He had no occasion in this manner to hurt the feelings of many of his readers. What they have been long accustomed to read with reverence, they must be shocked to see made the subject of ridicule and unsparing sarcasm, and especially by a professed Christian. From *unbelievers* we expect nothing better, and therefore we are prepared for every thing contemptuous that they can throw out. Having nothing in their habitual feelings and state of mind congenial to the sentiments of Christians, (who believe that they derive every pleasing prospect for time and eternity from the Scriptures,) it cannot be supposed that they should respect those feelings of which they have no idea, and which they cannot conceive even to exist. They, therefore, have an excuse which Mr. Evanson has not.

Mr. Evanson must, in his early years, have been taught to peruse the whole of the *New Testament* with nearly equal respect; and in reading the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, must have felt just as he did in reading that of *Luke*. And as he grew up, and reflected upon what he read, and attended to the impressions which those writings made upon him, he must have perceived the same unequivocal marks of genuine piety, and a disinterested regard to truth, in *all* the evangelists. How he should ever come to lose those impressions, and feel differently in reading any of them, I can-

* On the question of "our Lord's formal appointment of the rite of Baptism" of which Mr. E. declares himself "not convinced." See his *Letter*, pp. 85—94.

not tell. But whenever he came to suspect, or to think, that they were not genuine, (which he must have done with great reluctance,) he should have contented himself with simply giving his reasons for the opinion he had adopted, and have dismissed those books as old friends, * to whom he had formerly conceived himself to be under some obligation, and not have turned them out of doors with so much rudeness and insult.

Mr. Evanson may impute it to weakness and prejudice, but I own I have not been able to read his work, and copy so much of it as I have thought proper to do, without very unpleasing feelings. Notwithstanding this, I hope it will not be perceived that it has at all influenced me in my replies to him, or that I have given way to asperity, where nothing but calm discussion was wanted. I could not treat Mr. Evanson as he has done the authors of the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*; and I am persuaded they will approve of my conduct, and not think the worse of their advocate for defending them without anger. † On this, as on every other occasion, I could wish to imbibe their excellent spirit, and in every controversy, in which human prejudices and passions are too apt to mix themselves, not to forget that I am a Christian.

I do not say this with a view to bespeak any peculiar mildness in Mr. Evanson's reply to me. Let every man write as he is naturally disposed; and if he should treat me with the same asperity with which he has treated the authors of the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, I shall not complain; having no reason to expect better usage than they have met with. I shall rather rejoice to fare as they do; and having been long used to pretty harsh treatment, I can very well bear it.

I write in the form of "Letters to a Young Man," as young persons are in the greatest danger of being caught with any superficial reasoning that tends, in the smallest degree, to remove restraints on the indulgence of their passions; and such persons will be too apt to conclude that, if

* Mr. Evanson replies, consistently with his theory, "Instead of friends they appeared to me to be palpable cheats and impostors." See "Letter to Dr. Priestley's Young Man. By Edward Evanson." *Ipswich*, 1794, p. iv.

† Mr. Evanson, (*Letter*, pp. iv. v.) in a manner unworthy of such a writer, takes advantage of this passage, and of one in the Sermon on the Death of Dr. Price, (Vol. XV. p. 453, *par.* 3,) to represent Dr. Priestley as seeming to agree with "the Church of Rome," in admitting "an intermediate state of paradise for the souls of the good and virtuous." Yet in that Sermon, (*ibid.* *par.* 2,) the author represents "the interval between the time of our death and that of our resurrection to be nothing at all, because not perceived by us."

the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, and so many of the Epistles of *Paul*, be spurious, that of *Luke*, and all the other books of the *New Testament*, may be so too. And if, with Mr. Evanson, they should confound the authenticity of those books with the credibility of the facts recorded in them, they will soon find themselves at liberty from any restraint that the belief of Christianity has hitherto imposed upon them.

With a view to such persons, I have, in these *Letters*, as on other occasions, endeavoured to point out the real foundation of our faith in the Gospel history, and to shew that it is independent of the authenticity of any books. It has not been by the fair examination of historical evidence, but in most cases, by some short metaphysical reasoning, that men have become *unbelievers*; and in general it has been their having conceived what they had been taught to consider as Christianity, to be unworthy of their ideas of God, or their discovering some seeming impropriety in the books which they had been taught to regard as inspired, that has, without any farther reasoning, induced them to reject Christianity. It cannot, therefore, be too strongly held out to them, that the truth of Christianity is independent of every thing of this kind; that, let them think what they will of the doctrines of the Gospel, or of the books that contain them, a man must have a divine mission who, in proof of it, does what God alone could empower him to do; and that Christ and the apostles unquestionably did such things, that is, work real miracles, if the evangelical history be only in the main true. For, without this it was naturally impossible that Christianity should have been received, as all history, sacred and profane, shews that it was, in the early ages.

When the mind is possessed of this fixed principle, it will not be so apt to revolt at seeming improbabilities in the books of Scripture. Finding it impossible to resist the evidence of miracles and of testimony, in favour of Christianity, a man will naturally consider the difficulties in every point of view; and if he be not unfortunately situated indeed with respect to information, he will soon satisfy himself that they are far from being insuperable; or, at least, that when every deduction from the strength of the evidence is made on this account, there will remain a great preponderance of evidence in its favour, such as will induce every reasonable man to act upon it; especially when he considers that the end of all faith in the Gospel is the observance of the moral precepts of it, and that the moral precepts of Christianity are the same with those of natural religion, the observance of which is

highly conducive to health of body and peace of mind in this life, without any regard to another; virtue hardly ever failing to be its own reward.

I mention these considerations in this place because, though I have no doubt of Mr. Evanson's friendly intention with respect to Christianity, many of his readers and admirers avail themselves of the principles of his work, as, in their opinion, highly unfavourable to it; and they are too ready to catch at every thing that, by any perversion, they can bend to their purpose.

In some respects this is unavoidable by all who, from the best intentions, and the purest regard to Christianity, endeavour to free it from any of the corruptions or abuses with which it has been loaded; since this necessarily occasions divisions among Christians, and has also too often an unpleasant effect on the tempers and conduct of the contending parties; and, to superficial spectators, these things furnish a specious objection to the religion about which they contend.

On this account I have taken this opportunity of shewing that no difference of opinion among Christians about the authenticity of the books of Scripture, or the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, will justify *unbelievers* in their rejection of it. It behoves them, as persons deeply interested in the discussion, to see every thing with their own eyes, and to judge for themselves, whatever labour may be necessary for that purpose. If it was an estate to which they thought they had, or might have, a title, they would not dismiss all attention to the subject because the lawyers they consulted could not agree about some points of law respecting it. Or if they were at sea in a storm, they would not think themselves unconcerned, because the sailors had different opinions about the best method of saving the ship.

Could *unbelievers* see things in their true light, without any improper bias upon their minds, from unworthy passions and pursuits, they would see that they had the greatest personal interest in the truth or falsehood of Christianity, and would make the most diligent inquiry into the evidence of it, without at all regarding what any other persons thought concerning it. And if, from any motive, they be truly diligent and impartial in their inquiries, such are the means of information that are now within their reach, that I have little doubt of their becoming Christians, and zealously attached to their religion; and, consequently, by cultivating the temper, and habitually discharging the duties of it, acquiring a superior dignity and excellence of character themselves, and thereby recommending it to the regard of others.

It will be observed that my quotations from Mr. Evanson are unusually long. I purposely made them so, that he might not have any just reason to complain of me for diminishing their strength. Still, however, I have left some articles untouched, but they are such as appeared to me to be least worthy of particular notice. After remarking upon almost every thing in his objections to the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, and the *Epistle to the Romans*, I thought it unnecessary even to mention his objections to some of the other Epistles. I also thought my readers would be tired of perusing things so very offensive to them, and at the same time so weak. But if Mr. Evanson, in his reply, should require it, I promise him to be as full in my remarks with respect to these, as I have been with respect to the former books.

Some who entertain my sentiments of Mr. Evanson's performance will wonder that a man of his abilities and learning, should write so weakly; and some, not being themselves judges of the controversy, will be apt to think there must be great uncertainty in the subject itself, when learned men can think so differently about it. But no person acquainted with the writings of Mr. Whiston, will think *him* to have been less able, or less learned, than Mr. Evanson; and yet his strange weakness of judgment with respect to subjects of Christian antiquity, (to which, notwithstanding, he did not fail to give much attention,) has not led any scholar to think that there is any particular uncertainty, or obscurity, in the subjects about which he has puzzled himself and some others so much. Single persons often entertain singular notions about politics, and things in common life; but it is a circumstance that has no effect on the decisiveness of the judgment of other persons when they have themselves given proper attention to the subjects. At present Mr. Evanson's performance does not stagger the learned,* and after some time I am confident it will have no more effect than Mr.

* Mr. Dodson, however, published in the "Commentaries and Essays," (No. 4, 1796, II. pp. 313—346,) "A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Evanson, in Defence of his principal Object, in his Book entitled 'The Dissonance of the Four generally-received Evangelists, and the Evidence of their respective Authenticity examined.'"

Yet Mr. Dodson thus qualifies his approbation:

"I differ from you on several points; but I think that you have succeeded in your principal object. I cannot agree with you in rejecting any of the thirteen epistles which bear the name of St. Paul, the authenticity of the Epistles to the Romans and Philippians, which contain some important prophecies since fulfilled, and of the Epistle to the Colossians, which, in chap. ii. 5, represents the Apostle, at Rome, as miraculously seeing things transacted at Colosse, appearing to me to be as well supported as the authenticity of the seven Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians and Thessalonians, and to Timothy, which you admit; and the external and internal evidence of the genuineness of the Epistle to the Ephesians, which, it is

Whiston's new canon of the *New Testament*. His curious reasoning now only serves to amuse us, shewing the weakness of the human mind in certain respects, at the same time that we admire its strength in others.

In my references to the Christian fathers I have generally contented myself with quoting Dr. Lardner and *Michaelis*. My collection of the fathers, which had occupied me more than twenty years, was demolished in the Riot at Birmingham, and it is too late in life for me to restore it. In the present case I am satisfied that my readers will have no more distrust than I have of the care, or fidelity, with which the writers above-mentioned have made their quotations.

probable, ought to be considered as addressed to the Laodiceans, and of the Epistles to Titus and Philemon, being in my opinion, too strong to allow us to entertain any doubts about them. The observations of Dr. Paley on this subject, in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, deserve particular attention.

"As to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the seven Catholic Epistles, and also the Epistles to the seven churches of Asia, in the beginning of the Apocalypse, which you reject, I forbear to inquire, whether you are warranted in so doing, as it will be sufficient for my purpose if the thirteen epistles which bear the name of St. Paul are genuine. I also think, that you have unnecessarily, and on insufficient grounds, rejected some passages of St. Luke's Gospel." *Com. and Essays*, II. p. 313. See *Mon. Repos.* XIII. p. 605.

"A New Testament; or, the New Covenant according to Luke, Paul, and John, published in Conformity to the Plan of the late Rev. Edward Evanson, A.M." in 1807, contains Luke's *Gospel* and *Acts*, the Epistles of *Paul* to the Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon; and the Revelation of John, excepting the epistles to the seven churches. Thus it appears from Mr. Dodson's *Letter*, that he received a more copious New Testament than Mr. Evanson.

In an *Advertisement* prefixed to this *New Testament*, it is remarked, "that few men lived and died with a firmer conviction of the truth and importance of the Christian revelation than Mr. Evanson," and that "he made its precepts the rule of his life and conduct; and seems to have enjoyed, in an eminent degree, the consolation and hopes which its promises hold forth to a dying race of creatures." Also, that "had Mr. Evanson lived, he would certainly have done that himself, which is performed, by his friend, as a memorial to his great talents, ardent assiduity, and inflexible integrity in the pursuit and promulgation of the truth.

"The cause of pure Christianity," adds this Editor, "has never yet been injured by fair inquiry and candid discussion; and it is confidently expected that the present publication, so far from increasing the number of unbelievers, will be the means of leading some persons to attend to the evidences of revelation, who have before discarded it as a cunningly-devised fable, on account of certain things attaching to it, which to them may seem to have been obviated by Mr. Evanson's inquiries." *Advertisement*, pp. vi. viii. ix.

Mr. Evanson died in 1805, (as mentioned, *supra*, p. 352, *Note*,) aged 74. "In February," says his biographer, "he was seized with the same complaint which terminated the valuable life of Dr. Priestley, a stricture in the Œsophagus." Without suffering "the least apparent diminution of his cheerfulness or the clearness of his intellect,—he continued growing weaker till the 24th September, when with the greatest fortitude and most perfect composure, from the reflection on a life spent in the uniform endeavour to obey the commands and follow the example of his Great Master, he laid himself down to rest, and so composed was his sleep, that, about five o'clock in the morning, he had breathed his last some minutes before it was perceived by his mournfully attending friends." *Mon. Repos.* I. pp. 59, 60.

LETTERS TO A YOUNG MAN.

PART II.

LETTER I.

Of the Nature of Historical Evidence, illustrated by that of the Propagation of Christianity.

DEAR SIR,

I AM happy to find that, in my former *Letters*,* I was able to give you satisfaction with respect to the propriety of *public worship*, and of the observance of the *Lord's day* for that purpose, in reply to the objections of Mr. Wakefield and Mr. Evanson. You have since read, as every scholar will do, Mr. Evanson's Treatise on "the Dissonance of the Four generally-received Evangelists;" and, as I perceive, you are, with many others, considerably impressed by it.

You are inclined to think that the Christian church has received the three Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, as well as several of the Epistles, without sufficient authority, and that the only authentic history of the origin and first planting of Christianity is to be found in the Gospel of *Luke*, and the *Acts of the Apostles*. You are also disposed to lay but little stress upon any evidence arising from *testimony*, with respect to events so remote and extraordinary, and to rely on that of *completed prophecy* in preference to it. You wish, however, to have my free thoughts on these subjects, and I shall have much pleasure in giving you them. The investigation of truth is always a pleasing employment, and it is more particularly interesting when the subject is *religion*.

You will naturally enough suspect, though you will not tell me so, that it is owing to *prejudice*, that I am unwilling to accede to opinions so novel and startling as those advanced

* *Supra*, pp. 314—330.

by Mr. Evanson ; and it would be vain for me to deny that I am as subject to prejudice as other men ; though, in general, I have not objected to any opinions on account of their *novelty*, or their not having been generally received, whether advanced by other persons, or suggested by myself. You will attend, however, to the arguments that I shall produce, and compare them with those of Mr. Evanson ; and let us both endeavour to keep our minds as free from prejudice as we can, that we may neither be misled ourselves, nor contribute to mislead others.

In the first place, I shall consider what Mr. Evanson has advanced with respect to *historical evidence* in general, as applied by him to the evidence of Christianity. “To all future ages,” he says, “prophecy, the completed prediction of events out of the power of human sagacity to foresee, is the only supernatural testimony that can be alleged in proof of the authenticity of any revelation. To those, for example, of the present age, who have any doubt about the certainty of the Christian revelation, and consequently of the truth and authenticity of those histories in which it is recorded, it cannot be of the least use to allege the miraculous acts there, and there only, related to have been performed by the first preachers of that revelation ; because those acts making a very considerable part of the narration, the authority and credibility of the histories must be firmly established before the miracles contained in them can reasonably be admitted as real facts. Prophecy, therefore,” he adds, “is by far the most satisfactory, and the only lasting, supernatural evidence of the truth of any revelation.”* And, “that the supernatural power of working miracles could only be intended to gain the new religion attention from the world, and to be a present testimony of its divine origin and authority, till the more lasting and more satisfactory proof of completed prophecy could take place.”†

I would be far from undervaluing the evidence of completed prophecy in favour of revelation. I value Christianity too much to neglect any proper argument in favour of it. Since God only can see into remote futurity, the causes of distant events being concealed from all human penetration, if we have sufficient evidence of any event being distinctly foretold, and we are satisfied that the prediction was no random conjecture, we necessarily conclude that it was dictated by God, and that any declaration con-

* *Dissonance*, 1792, pp. 5, 6. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 24, 25.

† *Ibid.* pp. 18, 19. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 36.

nected with it may be depended upon, since the Supreme Being could not intend to impose upon his creatures. I also believe that in the Scriptures there are several such predictions, the publication of which may be clearly proved to have been prior to the events.

But notwithstanding this, the proper and universally satisfactory evidence of all *past events*, miraculous as well as others, is the testimony of persons who were eye-witnesses of them. It depends upon a principle which no person will deny, viz. that human nature has been the same in all ages, and therefore that, if the testimony of persons now living, who could not be deceived themselves, and who had no motive to impose upon others, may be depended upon, that of persons in the same circumstances a hundred or a thousand years ago may be depended upon. They are but few things that we can see with our own eyes; but we are well satisfied with the evidence of their having been seen by others.

The evidence of the truth of Christianity is of this satisfactory kind; and if the facts on which it depends be of an extraordinary kind, as not being analogous to any thing that we ourselves are witnesses to; the testimony by which they are ascertained is in full proportion copious and definite; persons then living having had every motive that men could have to examine and re-examine every thing relating to them, both its friends and its enemies having been sufficiently interested so to do, and while the facts were *recent*, and capable of being easily investigated.

In the preceding extract, Mr. Evanson says, that the evidence of miracles is not to be depended upon, "because they make a considerable part of the narration, the truth of which is questioned."* But if the narrative be sufficiently authenticated, the truth of the miracles is as well established as that of any other facts; and there can be no objection to *them*, but what affects the *narrative*, that is, the books which contain the account of them. To make this objection of any weight, Mr. Evanson must maintain, with Mr. Hume, that no account of miracles can be credible. If they be credible at all, their credibility may be *ascertained* by sufficient testimony.

If, as he says, miracles could only be designed to *excite attention*,† till another kind of *proof*, viz. that "of completed

* This extract from the quotation (p. 361) will be seen to be incorrect. Mr. Evanson, whose manner is too often uncourteous, describes it as "a gross misrepresentation." *Letter*, p. 3.

† Mr. Evanson here complains of the words "and to be a present testimony of its divine origin and authority," being unnoticed in this reference to p. 361. *Ibid.* p. 4.

prophecy," can be applied, they could not themselves be a proof of any thing. But a completed prophecy is only a particular species of miracle; so that if *miracles* be no proof of a revelation, *this* also could answer no end, but to excite more attention. Miracles, however, did, in fact, not only excite attention, but actually enforced the belief of the divine missions of *Moses* and of *Christ*, long before any prophecies were known to be completed; and it was the satisfaction which the evidence of these miracles gave to those who saw them, that engaged the belief of those who did not see them.

In what other manner, and on what other principle, were so many converts made during the life of Christ, and till the destruction of Jerusalem, during all which time the prophecies in the Christian church were very inconsiderable? Were the Christians of those days, many of whom endured great hardships, and some of whom laid down their lives, for their profession of Christianity, (and many of them did not themselves see any miracle, but only heard the reports of others,) only in a state of attention and expectation, without any real belief in the divine mission of Christ, till they could see some prophecy completed? Nay, would the completion of any prophecy have produced a greater effect than did the certain belief, whether occasioned by the evidence of their own senses, or that of others, that Jesus wrought real miracles, and that he died, and rose from the dead? What other evidence of the divine mission of Christ, or of the truth of Christianity, was wanting to persons who really believed these facts?

Mr. Evanson may think that *miracles* were sufficient to convince those who themselves saw them; but that *completed prophecy* is necessary to the conviction of those who had no opportunity of seeing them. But if the evidence of *sight* was sufficient to convince the spectators that the miracles were real, a sufficient evidence that those spectators were convinced, that is, the evidence of *testimony*, can be all that is necessary to convince others; for this places them precisely in the situation of those who were the spectators. And if any person be so constituted, as to think that other men, of whose judgment and veracity he can have no doubt, were, from their own inspection and examination, satisfied with respect to the truth of any facts, without believing that they really took place, neither would he be convinced by the evidence of his own senses. Nothing can lead any man to suspend his assent in this case, but the persuasion

that, though all other persons might be imposed upon, *he* could not; which is what no man will presume to say of himself. The proof, therefore, that competent witnesses were satisfied of the reality of any fact, miraculous or otherwise, must be sufficient to convince others. And this it has never failed to do.

Mr. Evanson seems to suppose that our belief of the miracles of Christ and the apostles depends upon the authenticity of the books of the *New Testament* which contain the account of them; and certainly all our *knowledge* of these facts is derived from those books. But still our *faith* doth not rest upon the testimony of the writers of those books, but upon that of those who first received the books, and who transmitted them to us as authentic, which they would not have done, if they had not known them to be deserving of credit.

It is not because four persons, though the most unexceptionable evidences, assert that Christ and his apostles wrought miracles, that we believe the facts. We believe them on the evidence of the thousands and tens of thousands, themselves well acquainted with the facts, by whom it cannot be denied that the contents of these books were credited. It is on the testimony of all the primitive Christians, and in some measure of the Heathen world also, that we believe in the miracles, the death, and resurrection of Christ, in consequence of which we are Christians.

The books called *the Gospels* were not the *cause*, but the *effect*, of the belief of Christianity in the first ages. For Christianity had been propagated with great success long before those books were written; nor had the publication of them any particular effect in adding to the number of Christian converts. Christians received the books because they knew beforehand that the contents of them were true; and they were at that time of no further use than to ascertain and fix the testimony of living witnesses, in order to its being transmitted without variation to succeeding ages. For what could have been *the preaching of the Gospel* originally, but a recital of the discourses and miracles of Christ, by those who were eye-witnesses of them, to those who were not? The Gospels, therefore, contain the substance of all their preaching.

While the eye-witnesses were living, there was little occasion for books; and accordingly no histories were written till about thirty years after the ascension of Christ, when the eye-witnesses were going off the stage, and consequently

when their testimony, without being secured by writing, could not have been known with certainty, or have been transmitted to future ages. This was the natural and the actual progress of things in the primitive times.

Since the belief of Christianity did not originally depend upon the authenticity of any books, the disproving their authenticity will not affect its credibility. The miracles of Christ and the apostles must have been true, or the belief of Christianity could not have been established in the circumstances in which it may be proved from history that it did actually gain ground. And unbelievers in Christianity prove nothing against it, unless they can prove that Christianity did not make the progress that it is said to have done, while the facts were *recent*, or that the circumstances in which it was propagated were materially different from what is commonly apprehended ; as that the civil powers did not oppose its propagation, so that there was no persecution of Christians, nothing to lead its friends or its enemies to inquire into the evidence of the facts while they were recent. But the history of those times is so well known, that this is clearly out of any man's power, and must be so to the end of time, while any history of the first and second centuries shall exist.

The present state of things with respect to the belief of Christianity cannot be accounted for without supposing the state of it in the last century to have been such as all authentic history represents it. In like manner, going back through every century, we shall find that every one of them requires the preceding to have been what history informs us that it was, till we find that it could not possibly have had the spread that it evidently had in the times of *Pliny* and of *Nero*, unless such a narrative as that of the *Gospels* and the *Acts of the Apostles* had been true, whether those particular books be authentic or not.

We have no reason, therefore, from a regard to Christianity, to be alarmed at any effect that Mr. Evanston's publication can have. Whatever we may think with respect to the authenticity of any particular books, all history is a standing and sufficient evidence of the truth of Christianity, and affords a firm foundation of our faith. I shall, therefore, proceed with perfect calmness to examine what Mr. Evanston has advanced against the authenticity of the *Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John*, and in favour of the preference that he is disposed to give to that of *Luke*, not as a believer

in Christianity against an unbeliever, but as one critic, if I may so call myself, against another; and I wish you to attend to my reasoning with the same dispassionate calmness with which I write.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

Of the Authenticity of the Four Gospels in general.

DEAR SIR,

MR. EVANSON, without seeming to consider that the authenticity of his favourite Gospel of *Luke*, rests on the very same foundation with that of the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, more than insinuates, that their authority is very doubtful. "The whole weight," he says, "of the historical evidence in favour of the authenticity of the four Gospels, amounts to no more than this, that those books, in the main of their contents, were extant in the latter end of the second century, and were received by all the Christian writers whose works have been suffered to come down to us, as the writings of the several apostles and apostolic men whose names they bear. But besides the suspicious circumstance already mentioned, arising from the prophecies of the Gospel, this evidence is defective in such essential points, as render it wholly unsatisfactory, and insufficient to prove any matter of consequence, even in the ordinary courts of justice: for neither the competency nor veracity of the witnesses can be depended on."*

If this be the case, no regard is due to any of the Gospels, or to any of the books of the *New Testament*. But the circumstances of the Christian church, which received these books, and transmitted them to us, were such, as there cannot be a doubt with respect to the *competency* of their evidence, because they were published in the life-time of thousands, and myriads, who were as competent witnesses of the facts as the writers themselves; and there cannot be any question of their *veracity*, unless we suppose that they all combined to tell and to propagate a falsehood, to their own prejudice, and merely to impose upon all posterity; which would be a greater miracle, as being more contrary to what we know of human nature, than any thing recorded in those books.

* *Dissonance*, p. 13. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 20.

Mr. Evanson evidently argues upon the idea, that the writers who first mention the *Gospels* are the only witnesses of their authenticity; and he thinks they were too remote, and too prejudiced, to be depended upon. But besides that no *motive* can be imagined for such conduct, let them be supposed to have been ever so liable to prejudice, it was not in their power to impose upon the world with respect to these books. For though there were few writers between the time in which the Gospels were written, and *Justin Martyr*; and admitting, what there is no occasion to do, that all the intervening writers are spurious, it was only an interval of about seventy years, and in this there was no interruption of Christian churches. In all this time, the Scriptures of the *New Testament*, as well as those of the *Old*, were constantly and publicly read; so that the books which had been received as authentic, by those who were themselves judges of their authenticity, could not be unknown; and there never was any doubt with respect to any of the *Four Gospels*, the *Acts of the Apostles*, and the far greater part of the *Epistles*.

We find in *Eusebius*, that *Papias*, bishop of *Hierapolis*, who was acquainted with the daughters of that *Philip* who baptized the eunuch of the queen of *Ethiopia*, and who wrote, A. D. 116, only about fifty years after the writing of the Gospels, mentions the Gospel of *Matthew*, and in such a manner, as that it appears there was not then any dispute about it;* so that there cannot be any reason to doubt, that the Gospel which bears his name, was the same that we now have, and as it was originally published.

As there had not, at that time, been any general persecution of Christians, it is probable that the originals of the books, which they held in the highest esteem, and especially the epistles of *Paul* to particular churches, were preserved till so many copies had been taken, and so many translations made of them, as would put it out of the power of fraud to impose upon the world with respect to them. The interest that all Christians certainly took in those books, would ensure this. As these books were, no doubt, then, as they are now, publicly read in all Christian churches,

* Mr. Evanson replies, "The words of *Papias*, quoted by *Eusebius*, (Hist. Eccl. L. iii. C. xxxix.,) are, 'Matthew composed a writing of the oracles,' (meaning, without doubt, the doctrines of the Gospel,) 'in the Hebrew language; and every one interpreted them as he was able.'—Surely the utmost that can reasonably be inferred from it is, that *Papias* himself made no dispute about it." *Letter*, p. 22.

the authenticity of any other books is not to be compared with that of these.

The superior evidence of the authenticity of the books of the *New Testament*, may be illustrated by that of books known to have been used in schools from the time of their first composition, and that of books which only fall into the hands of men of leisure. Of the former, every school, and many of the scholars, would, of course, have copies; so that the difficulty of making any material alteration in them would soon become insuperable: whereas the other would only be copied now and then, according to the casual demand for them. The books of the *New Testament* had a similar advantage, by being read in all Christian churches, as well as in private families, with the additional one of the infinitely greater interest that Christians conceived themselves to have in their contents.

The ancient versions of the books of the *New Testament* afford a decisive proof of their antiquity. For though none that are now extant can be proved to have existed so early as Mr. Evanson requires, there is evidence that there were translations of them, probably the ground-work of those that we now have, in an earlier period. There were *Syriac* versions, and several *Latin* ones, in the very first century.* And this is highly probable in itself. For if there were converts to Christianity in *Syria*, which was contiguous to *Judea*, and among the Romans, as no doubt there were, they would get copies of all the writings that were held in esteem by Christians, as soon as they heard of them.

Mr. Evanson seems not to have been aware of the difficulty of forging books, especially such as those of the *New Testament*, on account of the peculiarity of their *style*, which is so unlike that of any other writings whatever, more especially for the *Hebraisms* that occur in them. On this account the writers must have been Jews; whereas Mr. Evanson supposes them to have been written in so late a period, that it is almost certain there were few, if any, Jewish writers. And no *Jewish Christians*, if we know any thing of their sentiments, would have concurred in such an imposition; because they opposed those corrupt doctrines and practices which Mr. Evanson supposes they were written to promote. He will hardly suppose that any Jewish Christian would have forged the epistles ascribed to *Paul*.

* See Michaelis's *Introduction to the New Testament*, by Marsh, 1802, I. p. 44. (P.) 1780, pp. 53, 95.

As to writers, properly *Greek*, forging these books, it would have been absolutely impossible. Besides the many insuperable difficulties arising from an attention to geography, chronology, and history, the mode of writing is wholly unlike that of any Greek. The earliest Greek Christians, who favoured the opinions that Mr. Evanson will deem corrupt, were *Justin Martyr*, and his disciple, *Tatian*. But how unlike is their style to that of the *New Testament*, and how incapable (though the former of them lived in *Palestine*) must they have been of forging such books as these! Besides, they were both too honest to think of any such thing.

There were, no doubt, in pretty early times, other Gospels written in imitation of the genuine ones, though not, perhaps, with a view to impose upon the world, with respect to any thing of importance, for that was manifestly impossible. But learned Christians were, from the beginning, so attentive to this business, that the attempts could never succeed.

Serapion, bishop of Antioch, A. D. 200, "in an epistle to some who had too much respect for a work entitled, *The Gospel of Peter*," said, "We, brethren, receive Peter, and the other apostles, as Christ: but, as skilful men, we reject those writings which are falsely ascribed to them; well knowing that we have received no such."* *Austin* says, "We know the writings of the apostles, as we know the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Varro, and others; and as we know the writings of divers ecclesiastical authors: forasmuch as they have the testimony of contemporaries, and of those who have lived in succeeding ages."†

Accordingly, learned men, (and Christian churches were never without such men,) as *Serapion*, *Origen*, *Eusebius*, *Jerome*, and *Austin*, had it in their power to ascertain the genuineness of all the books used by Christians; and it appears from their writings, that it was done to general, if not universal satisfaction, before there was any interruption of learning, civilization, or Christianity, in that part of the world in which the Gospel originated. Dr. Lardner observes, that, "from the quotations of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and other writers of the second century, of Origen in the third, and of Eusebius in the fourth century, it appears, that the greatest part of the books which are now received by us, and are called canonical, were uni-

* Lardner, VI. p. 29. (P.)

† Ibid. p. 31. (P.)

versally acknowledged in their times, and had been so acknowledged by the elders and churches of former times. And the rest now received by us, though they were then doubted of, or controverted by some, were well known, and approved by many.”*

The books concerning which doubts were entertained in the time of *Eusebius*, (it not being agreed by all, that they were written by the persons to whom they are ascribed,) were only the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, that of *James*, the second of *Peter*, the second and third of *John*; and the *Revelation*, which Mr. Evanson, depending upon the evidence of completed prophecy, rather than that of historical testimony, considers as one of the most authentic of all the books of the *New Testament*.

That doubts were entertained concerning the books above-mentioned, is the less to be wondered at, as they were not epistles addressed to particular churches, where provision would naturally be made for preserving them, but either treatises or epistles addressed to whole descriptions of men, or to private persons, in whose hands they would be more liable to accidents.

Mr. Evanson considers the “pretended power of working miracles,” as an “incontestable proof of the deceit and falsehood of the orthodox Christians of early times;”† whereas it proves nothing but their *credulity*, and that in one particular respect; and the number of real miracles in the age immediately preceding their own, would, without any great imputation upon them, dispose them to believe in others on slight grounds. Besides, this credulity, and especially the charge of falsehood and imposition in this case, is greatly exaggerated by Mr. Evanson.

The strongest cases that Mr. Evanson mentions are the following: “A third,” he says, meaning *Tertullian*, “asserts, upon his own knowledge, that the corpse of one dead Christian, at the first breath of the prayer made by the priest, on occasion of its own funeral, removed its hands from its sides, into the usual posture of a suppliant, and when the service was ended, restored them again to their former situation; and relates as a fact, which he and all the orthodox of his time credited, that the body of another Christian already interred moved itself to one side of the grave, to make room for another corpse which was going to be laid by it.”‡

* *Lardner*, VI. p. 26. (P.) † *Dissonance*, p. 18. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 36.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 15. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 32, 33.

Now, this is by no means a just representation of the case ; as *Tertullian* does not say that he knew *the fact*, but only *the woman* of whom it was related, *Scio fœminam*, &c. And that both the stories were only such as he had heard, and not what he knew of himself, is evident from his introducing the latter of them by saying, *Est et alia relatio apud nostros*, that is, There is another report current among us. A man must have very little knowledge of human nature, or human life, who can infer from such credulity as this, that a person would knowingly impose upon the world by fictitious books. I do not believe *Tertullian* to have been any more capable of this than Mr. Evanson himself.

How easily, and I believe innocently, such stories as these in *Tertullian* may gain ground, and be propagated, I had a remarkable instance, when I lived at Leeds, where the Dissenters to whom I was minister bury their own dead. A young woman was brought to be interred on a Saturday evening ; and, having performed part of the service in the meeting-house, I was waiting in the vestry till the corpse was carried to the grave ; when, finding that the people were longer about this business than usual, I asked the clerk what occasioned the delay. He said, they were disputing whether the woman was really dead. Upon this, I went to them, and asked whether any of them had a doubt about her being dead ; and the mother, who was present, saying that *she* had, I advised them to take her home, and endeavour to bring her to life, it being time enough to bury her when it should appear that she was certainly dead ; and accordingly they took her back again.

This incident, as might be expected, gave occasion to much conversation, and many reports ; and the next day I heard that one person, talking of it to another, said, “ She was alive sure enough, for that she was as red as a fox, and sweat like a brock ; ” common proverbs in that part of the country. On hearing this, I said, I should not wonder if it was reported in some of the neighbouring towns, that the woman was actually come to life. But more than this took place in Leeds itself ; for presently after this it was said, that she came to life in the meeting-house ; that, lifting up her head, she moved the lid of the coffin, and that, being taken out, and resting a little in the vestry, she walked home by the help of the clerk. Now I can easily conceive that this story grew to this size, and in so short a time, in consequence of being frequently repeated, without

the least intention to deceive in any of the relaters. The woman, however, was really dead, and we buried her on the Monday following.

Had any person living in Leeds, and only acquainted with this woman, believed the report, and related it in such *Latin* as *Tertullian* wrote, he would have introduced it with saying, as he does, *Scio fœminam*, &c.*

Mr. Evanson says, "There is still a greater defect in the testimony of those early writers, than even their superstitious credulity. I mean their disregard of honour and veracity, in whatever concerned the cause of their particular system."† But even admitting this, which I am far from believing to be the case, it was absolutely out of the power of any Christians, divided as they were among themselves, from the very first, to impose forged books upon others. They would watch one another too narrowly for this. That all the Christian world, credulous as many of them may be supposed to have been, should agree to receive books as genuine, which they knew not to be so, is not to be admitted on such a pretence as this.

This blame is thrown by Mr. Evanson on those whom he terms "the orthodox church,"‡ by whom he means the *Platonizing Christians*, for with them the doctrine of the *Trinity*, at which he justly takes so much offence, originated. But the very first of these was *Justin Martyr*, as has been fully proved by Mr. Lindsey,§ and the canon of the *New Testament*, with respect to the four Gospels, and all the most important books, was fixed long before his time. In early times the Christian world, as Mr. Evanson will acknowledge, was, and must have been, *Unitarian*, with the exception of some *Gnostics*; and these entertained so great an aversion to each other, at least the former to the latter, that it could not have been in the power of either of them to impose upon the others, with respect to the authenticity of books equally

* Mr. Evanson, in reply, after indulging in no very gentle raillery, on his opponent's explanation of *Scio fœminam*, subjoins the following "copy of Tertullian's own words, with the addition of the short sentence immediately preceding, which," Mr. E. says, "confirms his personal knowledge of the fact :"

"De meo didici. Scio fœminam quamdam vernaculam Ecclesiæ, forma et ætate integra functam; post unicum et breve matrimonium; cum in pace dormisset, et morante adhuc sepultura, interim oratione presbyteri componeretur, ad primum halitum orationis manus à lateribus dimotas in habitum supplicem conformasse, rursumque condita pace, situi suo reddidisse. Est et alia relatio apud nostros. In cœmetrio, corpus corpori juxta collocando spatium recessu communicasse.' *Tertulliani De Anima*, C. li." *Letter*, pp. 25, 26.

† *Dissonance*, p. 16. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 33, 34.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 112. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 141.

§ *Sequel*, 1776, pp. 305—309, 400, 401.

received by them all. Besides, had the books been forged for any particular purpose, they would have been made more favourable to that purpose than they appear to be.

Notwithstanding this well-known state of things, Mr. Evanson says, "From what St. Luke and other writers inform us, there is no doubt but the orthodox church, if she had chosen to preserve them, might, at this hour, have had forty instead of four different Gospels; and many of them much more deserving her regard than three of those she hath thought fit to select and save from the general wreck, in which the writings of the primitive Christians have been involved."*

This is advanced by Mr. Evanson from mere imagination, without even the appearance of any authority, so that it requires no refutation at all. Let Mr. Evanson enumerate these forty Gospels,† and shew that any of them was deserving of so much credit as any of the four that are now received. *Origen* must have been a better judge in this respect than Mr. Evanson, and, according to *Eusebius*, he says, "As I have learned by tradition concerning the four Gospels, which alone are received without dispute by the whole church of God under heaven."‡ Accordingly, in whatever estimation the few spurious Gospels that we read of were held by some for a time, they sunk into universal discredit, and are lost, while *the four* are retained to this day, and will, I doubt not, continue to be respected as they now are, notwithstanding any attempt to discredit them. In fact, it is evident from the writings of Mr. Jones and Dr. Lardner, to which Mr. Evanson ought to have paid some attention, that there never were more than two or three of those spurious Gospels, and that the credit they had was only with a few, and that of short duration.

* *Dissonance*, p. 112. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, p. 141.

† "Luke," says Mr. Evanson, "assures us, *many* had written evangelical histories before the date of his own, that is, within the first thirty years after our Saviour's death. What number then shall we understand by *many*? When I consider that Christian churches were before that time founded at Jerusalem, in Samaria, Phenice, Syria, in every province of Asia Minor, and in many cities of Macedonia and Greece, I cannot think twenty too large a number to be intended by Luke; and, as the very same motives that had induced those authors to write their Gospels continued to operate afterwards, it appears to me not unreasonable to suppose, that in the course of the next forty or fifty years, sixteen more were written in different places, to which if we add the canonical four, my supposed forty will be accounted for; and we have not yet reckoned the Gospel of Peter, nor the two Gospels according to the Hebrews, nor the Gospel of the Simonians, nor that according to the Egyptians, nor the traditions of Matthias, all which were extant in the second century." *Letter*, pp. 26, 27. See Toland's *Amyntor*, annexed to his "Life of John Milton," 1761, pp. 165—175.

‡ *Lardner*, VI. p. 28. (*P.*)

It is not probable that any spurious *Gospels* would be written, whatever were the views of the writers, till some genuine ones had got established credit. As to those that *Luke* refers to, he does not censure them as *spurious*, but only as *imperfect*; and there can be no doubt but that, of transactions of such importance, there would, from the earliest times, be many accounts, more or less accurate, in circulation among Christians.

Mr. Evanson may say, that the learned *orthodox* Christians were more assiduous in imposing upon the world with respect to the fabrication of books favourable to their purpose, than the *Unitarians* were in guarding against their impositions. But the Christian world was never without learned Unitarians, from the earliest times to those of *Photinus*; and in the age in which Mr. Evanson says that the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, were written, the majority of Christian bishops were, no doubt, *Unitarian*; so that any attempt to impose upon them books unfavourable to their sentiments, would have been in vain.

Mr. Evanson cannot say that the *Unitarians* might have made remonstrances on the subject, but that, their writings being lost, we have no means of knowing what they were: for though *writings* may be lost, yet, if they occasion any discussion, *arguments*, or at least traces of the *opinions* supported by them, will not be lost. Thus we can easily collect the arguments of the *Gnostics*, the *Unitarians*, and the *Arians*, of ancient times, from the writings of their antagonists, though all their own are perished. If, therefore, the Unitarians, or any other denomination of Christians, had ever complained that the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, or *John*, were spurious, we could not but have heard that they did so, and should also have known, though indirectly, the objections they made to them. Let Mr. Evanson account, if he can, for the absolute, and almost instant rejection of the Gospel of *Peter*,* and the universal reception of those of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, without supposing the latter to be genuine, and the other not.

Mr. Evanson seems to think there is no evidence for the authenticity of the books that he rejects from the canon of the *New Testament* besides that of the *orthodox Christians*, by whom he means those who corrupted the gospel, and who wished to transmit their peculiar opinions and practices to posterity. But, besides overlooking the consideration

* See *Amyntor*, p. 166; *Lardner*, II. pp. 248, 249.

that, since the gospel was first preached by the apostles, they who corrupted it must, of course, at first, have been few, and therefore that the great majority, who held it as it had been delivered to them, would have effectually prevented any such imposition; and also the farther consideration, that they who can be supposed to have forged books for the purpose above-mentioned were by no means agreed among themselves, and therefore would never have favoured one another's impositions; I say, besides overlooking these obvious considerations, he seems to have forgotten, that we have, in an indirect way, but by no means liable to any just suspicion, the testimony of those who are called *heretics*, and also that of the *Heathens*, to the authenticity of these books. It is true that their own writings are perished; but by means of their adversaries, we know what they did write, and what they thought, on every important subject. And there is reason to conclude that they admitted the authenticity of all the *four Gospels*, as well as that of some; and probably of all the *Epistles of Paul* that are objected to by Mr. Evanson.

The *Cerinthians*, who were probably some of the earliest *Gnostics*, contemporary with *John* and the other apostles, must have known, according to *Epiphanius*, the Gospel of *Matthew*, because he says they adopted part of it. * And I would observe, that the rejection of the whole, or part, of a book, by the *Gnostics*, did not imply that they thought it spurious, but only that they did not approve of it, and especially that they did not choose to make use of it in their churches. *Marcion*, who lived in the beginning of the second century, mentioned the Gospel of *Matthew*, as well as that of *Luke*, the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, with those of *Peter* and *James*, and ten *Epistles of Paul*; for he criticised them, and published new editions of them for the use of his disciples. †

The *Ebionites* I am far from considering as heretics, since, in my opinion, they were the genuine *Jewish Christians*; but they formed a body of Christians distinct from the *Gentiles*, who considered them as, on that account, heretics. Though they did not make use of any Gospel besides that of *Matthew*, with some variations, it is never said that they rejected the others; and it is certain that they knew of the *Epistles of Paul*, since they objected to the doctrine of them, and disliked him much on that account.

• Michaelis's *Introd.* I. p. 36. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 38. (P.)

Had there been any apparent cause of doubting the authenticity of the *four Gospels*, it could not have been unknown to the learned Heathens who wrote against Christianity; and they would, no doubt, have availed themselves of it, as affording a suspicion that the things recorded in them never happened. But it is evident that *Celsus*, who wrote in the beginning of the second century, *Porphyry*, the most learned of all the opposers of Christianity, and *Julian*, the most inveterate of them, considered the books of the *New Testament* in general as no forgeries. * Also, so early as the time of *Celsus*, there appear to have been many variations in different copies of them, which implies that they had been often copied, and therefore had existed a considerable time.

Mr. Evanson says, this “is very far from being, in any degree, a proof of the point in question. They were all much too great masters of argument not to see how greatly that very concession was in their favour.”† But why, then, did they not make use of it for that purpose? He adds, “And were not the author of these pages convinced, as he really is, upon better and firmer grounds, of the truth and divine authority of the revelation by Jesus Christ; and had he an inclination to prejudice the gospel in the opinion of thinking men; he cannot imagine a stronger argument than might be drawn against it, from the objectionable, contradictory passages contained in those books, on a supposition that they were all actually written by its first and most authoritative teachers.”‡ But if Christianity had been in any real danger from this quarter, it must have appeared long before this time. For the *four Gospels* were from the first as open to examination and objection as they are now; and if the contradictions were such as could never be discovered before, they could not be very glaring ones, or such as the Christian world had any thing to apprehend from. Whatever be the views of Mr. Evanson, other persons, as quick-sighted as he, would not have spared Christianity on this account.

Mr. Evanson speaks in general terms of the *corrupt Christianity* of those who, in his opinion, forged the *three Gospels*, and the *epistles* that he objects to. § But he should have

* See *Lardner*, VIII. pp. 10—15, 18, 207—219, 394—410.

† *Dissonance*, p. 2. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 18, 19.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 2, 3. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 19.

§ Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, and the Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude. See *supra*, p. 358.

stated what those corruptions were, and have shewn the probability of the persons to whom he ascribes the fabrication of them, having written them in that particular manner. He will not, for instance, pretend that they were favourers of the doctrine of transubstantiation who wrote those books, notwithstanding some passages in them are alleged in support of that doctrine, because it is certain that no such doctrine was entertained in so early an age. Now the greatest corruption of Christianity, and one that in Mr. Evanson's opinion, as well as my own, is the foundation of most of the rest, was the exaltation of the person of Jesus Christ to the rank of a superangelic being, or of God. But there was no opinion of this nature in the period to which Mr. Evanson is confined besides that of the *Gnostics*, who never had it in their power to impose any books on the rest of the Christian world. And if any *Trinitarians*, of whom history gives no account, had been concerned in the fabrication of those books, they would never have made them so favourable as they now are to the *Unitarian* doctrine.

Would any other than a strict *Unitarian* have made our Saviour uniformly speak of himself as nothing more than *a man*, as he always does in the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*; to say, that *of himself he could do nothing*, but that *the Father within him did the works*? Or when, in a figurative sense, he spake of his being *one with the Father*, would he have explained it of such an union as subsisted between himself and his disciples, and between them all and God? Also the epistles that Mr. Evanson rejects are all *Unitarian*.

Submitting these remarks to your candid attention,
I am Sir, &c.

LETTER III.

Of the Preference given by Mr. Evanson to the Gospel of Luke.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING considered what Mr. Evanson has advanced on the subject of the evangelical history in general, I shall add a few observations on his reasons for giving so decided a preference, as he does, to the Gospel of Luke; and to me it appears to be perfectly arbitrary; without any proper evidence, external or internal, in favour of its superior authenticity.

He says, that "the histories of Luke were certainly first

in order of time.”* But *Origen*, who lived nearer to the time of their publication, says, “that according to the tradition received by him, the first Gospel was written by Matthew, once a publican, and afterwards a disciple of Jesus Christ.” This Gospel also seems to be alluded to by *Clemens Romanus*, the earliest of all the Christian writers after the apostles, and the genuineness of whose epistle is allowed by Mr. Evanson himself. And if we examine the testimony of all the ancients, detailed at full length by Dr. Lardner, we shall not find any preference whatever given to the Gospel of *Luke*, either as written more early, or in any other respect of more value, than the others. On the contrary, the preference is always given to the Gospels of *Matthew* and *John*, as written by eye-witnesses, whereas it was thought that *Mark* and *Luke* could only collect and digest the evidence of others. But Mr. Evanson writes as if he had never heard either of Mr. Jones or Dr. Lardner, or of the evidence produced by them in favour of the present canon.

Mr. Evanson says, “that St. Luke’s work itself very strongly implies that St. Matthew had written no Gospel at all before the fourth year of Nero,”† meaning before he himself wrote. But all that can be inferred from what *Luke* really says, is, that he had not *seen* any satisfactory account of the life of Christ before he undertook his, and therefore that he had not seen the Gospel of *Matthew* or *Mark*, which are nearly as large and full as his own. Dr. Lardner more naturally infers from this circumstance, that all the three evangelists wrote about the same time, unknown to each other, viz. A.D. 63, 64, or 65,‡ and the circumstances of the Christian church at that time, viz. the approach of the dispersion of the apostles, and other primitive Christians, by the Jewish war, would lead Christians in different and distant places to desire to have some written account of what they had been taught concerning Christ; and for this purpose they would naturally apply to those whom they thought the best qualified to give them the information they wanted.

The account of *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, from such evidence as he could collect, and though late, yet before the loss of any of the writings of the primitive Christians, of which we now complain, appears very natural. “Peter went to Rome—John, in particular, took up his abode at Ephesus—about this time, the other evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke,

* *Dissonance*, p. 24. (P.) Ed. 2, pp. 42, 43.

† *Ibid.* p. 114. (P.) Ed. 2, p. 144.

‡ See *Lardner*, VI. pp. 44, 233.

published their Gospels, which were soon spread over all the world, and were received by all the faithful in general with great regard.—Nevertheless, the Christians of Asia having brought those Gospels to him, earnestly entreated him to write a farther account of such things as were needful to be known, and had been omitted by the rest: with which request he complied.” *

In consequence of this, the three Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, would be written about the same time, and that of *John* not long after; and there is nothing in any of the Gospels that is unfavourable to this supposition.

Mr. Evanson lays great stress on the writer of the Gospel of *Luke* intimating that he was the companion of *Paul*, whereas, he adds, “the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark contain not the slightest insinuation that their authors were apostles of Jesus Christ, or even men of the apostolic age.” † But the same objection might be made to the authenticity of many of the books of the *Old* and *New Testament*, and other ancient writings, the authors not mentioning their own names, or speaking of themselves in the third person. We believe that Moses, and others, wrote the books that are ascribed to them, from the testimony of those who first received them, and who transmitted them to posterity. It is not a writer’s calling himself the author of any book, or his indirectly intimating that he was present at the transactions that he relates, that will ensure our belief of it. We must know that such assertions, or intimations, were credited at the time of the publication. This is our only authority for the facts. It is on this evidence that we believe that *Julius Cæsar* and *Tacitus* wrote the books that are ascribed to them.

According to universal, uncontradicted tradition, the writers of the Gospels of *Matthew* and *John* were eye-witnesses of what they relate; and there is nothing in the narratives that is inconsistent with this supposition, but many circumstances highly favourable to it; whereas, according to *Luke* himself he was only a collector of the evidence of others.

We are, no doubt, furnished by *Luke* with the date of his works, viz. soon after *Paul* had been two years prisoner at Rome. ‡ But there is no evidence whatever that *Matthew* or *Mark* wrote later; and the similar manner in which they all introduce the prophecy concerning the destruction of

* *Lardner*, VI. p. 37. (P.)

† *Dissonance*, p. 21. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 39.

‡ See *Appendix*, No. XI.

Jerusalem, makes it highly probable that they all wrote in similar circumstances with respect to that event, viz. before it took place.

Mr. Evanson lays great stress on *Silas* being the real author of the books that now bear the name of *Luke*. But admitting this, I do not know that it will add to the authority that they would be entitled to from the consideration of their being written by any other companion of *Paul*, as the writer, whatever might be his name, certainly was. The criticism is by many thought ingenious, but it appears to me to be ill-founded. Had it been just, I should have expected some intimation of it in some early Christian writer, whereas none of them appear to have had any such idea.

Mr. Evanson says, that "the writer" (of the *Acts of the Apostles*) "himself informs us that his name was *Silas*; that he was one of those *chief men among the brethren*," * &c. But this Mr. Evanson is certainly not authorized to say. All that he can pretend is, that it may be *inferred* from circumstances that the author of the book was *Silas*. But surely that high commendation of himself is not favourable to Mr. Evanson's hypothesis.

Besides, if it was this writer's custom to speak of himself in the first person, as is evident from his sometimes saying *we* did so and so; why did he not do so *uniformly*, and instead of saying, (*ch. xvi. 30.*) *They went out of prison*, when himself was one of them, say, *We went out of prison*? This he never does, when *Silas* was certainly one of the company. I wonder it should not have struck Mr. Evanson himself to observe, that from *Acts xvi. 10—17*, *we* or *us* occurs in almost every verse; but that immediately after, whenever *Paul* and *Silas* only are mentioned, the style changes to *they* and *them*.

It is not natural for a writer to call the same person by two different names, unless he somewhere signify that they do mean the same person. Now in two epistles, viz. *2 Cor. i. 19*, and *1 Thess. i. 1*, *Paul* mentions *Silvanus*, which is not doubted to be the same with *Silas*, who otherwise is never mentioned by *Paul* at all; and in three epistles, viz. *Col. iv. 14*, *2 Tim. iv. 11*, and *Philemon 24*, he mentions *Luke*. It is natural, therefore, to conclude that *Silas*, or *Silvanus*, and *Luke*, were different persons. †

Mr. Evanson says, the writer of the *Acts of the Apostles* must have been *Silas*, because only he and *Timothy* went

* *Dissonance*, p. 106 (P.) *Ed. 2*, p. 133.

† See *Appendix*, No. XII.

with him “through Phrygia and Galatia, and came to Troas, where Paul, in a vision, was directed to go over into Macedonia; ‘and after he had seen the vision,’ says the author, ‘immediately *we* endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering, that the Lord had called *us* to preach the gospel unto them.’ This is the first passage in which the writer speaks in his own person, and in the same person he frequently expresses himself afterwards to the end of his history.”* But it is no where said that, though *Silas* and *Timothy* were with *Paul* in this journey, he had no other companions, and *Luke* might join them at Troas.

He adds, “As it is evident, from this part of the *Acts* compared with 2 *Cor.* i. 19, and with the address of both the Epistles to the *Thessalonians*, that *St. Paul* had no attendants when he first preached the gospel in Macedonia and Greece, besides *Silas* or *Silvanus*, of which last name *Silas* is merely an abbreviation, and *Timotheus*; one of those two must be professedly the writer of these histories. That it was not *Timotheus* appears from *Acts* xx. 4, 5, where the author enumerates *Timotheus* amongst those disciples who accompanied *Paul* on his return into Asia, and adds, ‘These going before, tarried for *us* at Troas.’”† But what *Paul* says is only this: “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us,—and *Silvanus*, and *Timotheus*,” &c., and this was at *Corinth*, where *Luke* might not be with them, or might not have particularly distinguished himself by preaching. On such weak foundations is this hypothesis founded!

Mr. Evanson infers that the Gospels of *Matthew* and *Mark* were written after that of *Luke*, because they contain not only many of the same particulars, but sometimes in the same words. “A work,” says he, “so evidently borrowed in many passages, and in some literally transcribed from *St. Luke*, and in all the rest of it so badly written, cannot be a translation of any original Hebrew work; but must have been composed, in the very form in which we have received it, long after the publication of the Gospel of *Luke*, and consequently not by *St. Matthew*, nor any other apostle.”‡

But similar things being found in all these Gospels, is no more a proof that *Matthew* or *Mark* copied *Luke*, than that he copied them; and the similarity is easily accounted for without supposing that any of them copied from the others,

* *Dissonance*, pp. 107, 108. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 134.

† *Ibid.* p. 108. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 134, 135. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 159. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 198.

since there might be imperfect but authentic accounts of many of the particulars, which were equally in the hands of them all, and which might be copied, with more or less variation, by them all. That there were such imperfect accounts, is expressly asserted by *Luke*, and is natural in itself.

Many persons, no doubt, would be careful to commit to writing such accounts of the discourses and miracles of Christ as they heard from the apostles and other early preachers of Christianity. Many of these might be compared, and means might be used, while the preachers were accessible, to get them authenticated; and from these scattered writings, as well as from their own recollection, and other evidence, might the three Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, be composed. This natural supposition easily accounts for the resemblance we sometimes find between these writers, and it is, on several accounts, exceedingly improbable that any of them would have borrowed from the others without acknowledgement, and least of all that any of them have *abridged* any of the others, as many now suppose.

The evangelists were not writers by profession, and therefore cannot be supposed to have written such books as the *Gospels*, if they had known of any accounts of the discourses and miracles of Christ so well calculated to answer their own views as any of the others manifestly were. As to *abridgements*, they are always made to bring a work into less compass. But all the Gospels are nearly of the same size, and the evangelist who gives a more succinct account of some particulars, gives a fuller account of others, which an abridger would not have done. Also, a person who had only proposed to abridge the work of another, would never have thought of departing from the order of the narrative before him; and yet no two of the evangelists relate things in any thing like the same order.

Still less would an abridger think of contradicting his author, as the evangelists must knowingly have done, if they had any of the other Gospels before them at the time of their writing. Least of all would they have done it in things of small consequence, for which there could not have been any motive. It is often said that *Mark* has abridged *Matthew*; but if this had been the case, would he, besides departing wholly from the order of *Matthew*, whose narrative he must have considered as the best authority, (since he was present at the transactions, and himself not,) have differed from his author in such a circumstance as the day on which Jesus

purged the temple, to mention no other points of difference ? If any writer vary from another whom he has before him, it must be for what appears to him a sufficient reason ; and so far he must be considered as an original writer, having some other authority for what he advances. There are, besides, many things in *Mark* that are not to be found in *Matthew*, or *Luke*.

As to the inconsistencies that are found in the different evangelists, of which Mr. Evanson says, "Those evangelical histories contain such gross, irreconcilable contradictions, that no close reasoning, unprejudiced mind can admit the truth and authenticity of them all ;"* nothing can be inferred from them, but that the authors did not write in concert, and did not copy from one another, a circumstance highly favourable to the authenticity of their writings. But these things are much exaggerated by Mr. Evanson, who says, there are "many obvious inconsistencies and improbabilities in several of the canonical Scriptures, which it was impossible to account for† on a supposition that the authors were men of that veracity and information of their subject, which must be expected from the apostles and other miraculously-gifted disciples of Jesus Christ."‡ "That many of those scriptures which form the most essential part of the canon of the apostate church must be fabulous and false, seems as certain," he says "as that the word of God is true."§

Had any person who contended for the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures advanced this argument, I should not have wondered at it, but that Mr. Evanson should do it, and admit, as I doubt not he does, that the authors of them wrote without any inspiration at all, and a considerable time after the events, (in consequence of which it was natural to expect many variations in their accounts,) does surprise me not a little. They might all be very honest men, and in the main well informed with respect to what they undertook to relate, and yet write their several narratives with all the variations that we find in them. Few persons have noted more real inconsistencies in the different evangelists than myself, as may be seen in the *Dissertations prefixed to my Harmony of the Gospels* ; || but it never occurred to me that they furnished any objection to the authenticity of any of them.

I am, &c.

* *Dissonance*, p. 1. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 17, 18.

† "Which he could not account for." *Ed.* 2.

‡ *Dissonance* (*Pref.*), p. vi. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. x.

§ *Ibid.* p. viii. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. xii.

|| See *supra*, pp. 9—14.

LETTER IV.

Of the Gospel of Matthew in general.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING considered what Mr. Evanson has advanced for his opinion concerning the preference to be given to the Gospel of *Luke*, before those of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, I shall attend to what he says of each of them in particular.

Of *Matthew* he says, "The author himself gives not the slightest hint to suggest to us who he was, much less that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ; so that the mere opinion of the fathers of the orthodox church of the second century is all the foundation there is for its being called St. Matthew's, which, we have seen, is not the case with St. Luke's histories."*

But the "opinion of the fathers of the orthodox church of the second century" (an expression intended to imply contempt) was not an opinion taken up by themselves: it evidently had its origin in an earlier age; and as no reason can be imagined why this Gospel should have been uniformly ascribed to *Matthew*, rather than to any of the other apostles, or primitive Christians, there is no reasonable cause of doubt on the subject. If we were to inquire into the reasons why the poems of Virgil or Horace are ascribed to them, we shall find it to be of the same kind, but by no means so full and satisfactory.

Besides, that the Gospel of *Matthew*, as well as those of *Mark* and *Luke*, are plainly alluded to by *Clemens Romanus*, who wrote A. D. 96, which is little more than thirty years after it was published, "Papias," bishop of Hierapolis," who wrote "about A. D. 116," and is "supposed to have been acquainted with John the Apostle," mentions the Gospel of *Matthew* by name.† "Irenæus, who was born in Asia, and in his youth was acquainted with Polycarp, a disciple of St. John," and who wrote "about A. D. 178, says, 'Matthew, then among the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel at Rome, and founding the church there.'—In another place he says, 'The Gospel according to Matthew was delivered to the Jews.'—Eusebius says, 'Matthew, having first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to

* *Dissonance*, p. 115. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 145.† *Lardner*, VI. p. 49. (P.)

go to other people, delivered to them, in their own language, the Gospel according to him, by that writing supplying the want of his presence with those whom he was leaving.”* Lastly, *Jerome* says, “Matthew, called also Levi, of a publican made an apostle, first of all wrote a Gospel in Judea, in the Hebrew language. Who afterwards translated it into Greek is uncertain.”†

How will Mr. Evanson account for this uniform tradition beginning so early, and transmitted without the least objection from any of the discordant sects of Christians, (for if this had not been the case, it would certainly have appeared,) in any consistency with his own notion of its having so late a date as he ascribes to it?

“It,” says he, “we inquire how the Gospel received as Matthew’s came to be in Greek, if he wrote it in Hebrew; the same writers inform us, that it was afterwards translated into Greek: but we find, nobody knows when, nobody knows where, and nobody knows by whom.”‡

This remark respecting the *translation*, by no means affects the authenticity of the work itself; it being sufficient that early and uniform tradition ascribes this Gospel to *Matthew*, though it varies with respect to the circumstance of the *language* in which it was written. This, being of far less consequence, would not be so much attended to. I am of opinion, with Dr. Lardner,§ that it bears no marks of a translation: and I see no reason why *Matthew*, who, from his employment, was probably better acquainted with the Greek language than the rest of the apostles,|| should write in any other language than that in which they did. His Gospel might have been translated by himself, or some other person under his inspection, into *Hebrew*; and this being the only Gospel used by the *Hebrew Christians*, it would naturally be supposed that it was written originally in their language. The Gospel which usually bore the name of that of the *Hebrews* and of the *Nazarenes*, used by the *Ebionite Christians*, Lardner, with great probability, thinks was “St. Matthew’s Gospel translated from the Greek, with the addition of some other things, taken from the other Gospels, and from tradition.”¶

Mr. Evanson supposes the “Gospels of Matthew and

* Lardner, VI. p. 49. (P.)

† Ibid. p. 51.

‡ Dissonance, p. 22. (P.) Ed. 2, p. 40.

§ Works, VI. p. 62. (P.)

|| “Whilst a publican, he would have frequent occasions both to write and speak Greek; and could not discharge his office without understanding that language.” Ibid. p. 64.

¶ Ibid. (P.)

Mark" to have been written in a late period on account of there being in them some "Latin words in Greek letters,—contrary, as he says, to the custom of all ordinary writers in Greek prior to the reign of Trajan."*

After ridiculing, as many *unbelievers* have done, the story of Jesus driving the cattle out of the temple with a whip made of small cords, in the Gospel of *John*, he says, "It is to be observed also, that this supposed apostle, in recording the instrument of violence constructed and used by our Saviour in this extraordinary manner, expresses it by a word neither of Greek nor Hebrew origin, but by a Latin word barbarously written in Greek characters, which, as I have observed in the case of the two preceding Evangelists, of itself affords strong grounds of presumption, that whoever the writer may be said to be, he did not live till after the beginning of the second century; and when corroborated by other circumstances, so highly improbable in themselves, and so directly contradictory to the history of St. Luke, is a very satisfactory proof that he was no apostle, nor any Jew, nor even a respectable Greek convert of the apostolic age; but one of the many composers of spurious and fabulous writings of the second century; and that he deserves not the least credit or attention."†

But who can be authorized to say at what precise period such a custom as this commenced, or how the custom might vary in different places, and with different persons, when nothing was necessary to introduce it, but an acquaintance with *Latin* terms, in consequence of the extension of the Roman empire, which had in fact embraced *Judea* a century before the writing of the Gospels? To say, with Mr. Evanson, that such a practice as this might be common in the time of *Trajan*, who came to the empire A. D. 98, and not be known A. D. 64, is not a little extraordinary. To distinguish with so much accuracy as this, a man must have a more nice discernment in the chronology of language, than *Sancho Panza's* father had in wine; who perceived a twang of iron, and also of leather, in a cask, at the bottom of which was afterwards found a key with a leather thong tied to it.

The lateness of the writing of the Gospel of *Matthew* is also inferred by Mr. Evanson from the phrase "unto this day," which occurs in it. But surely a period of thirty years, which elapsed between the transactions and the time of writing, is sufficient to account for this. Or such a sen-

* *Dissonance*, pp. 117, 213. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 147, 257.

† *Ibid.* pp. 225, 226. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 273, 274.

tence as this might have been originally written in the margin of some valuable copy, and afterwards have been inserted in the text, which no critic denies to have been the case with similar expressions in other books.

The writer of the Gospel ascribed to *Matthew*, Mr. Evanson says, did not understand "the prophecies of the Jewish Scripture."* But, surely, it does not follow from this, that the writer might not be an apostle. *Peter* misapplied the Scriptures in his famous speech on the day of *Pentecost*, as evidently as the writer of this Gospel, whoever he was. I am surprised at such an argument as this from a man who, in other respects, thinks so freely as Mr. Evanson does.

Some of the grossest of these misapplications of scripture occur in the two first chapters of *Matthew*, which contain the account of the miraculous conception of Jesus. But was it right in Mr. Evanson to take it for granted that these two chapters were written by the author of the rest of the book, when it must be known to him, that many persons think they have good reason for concluding that they were not; especially as the Gospel used by the *Jewish Christians*, which was the same in substance with that of *Matthew*, had not these two chapters? With a slight variation, this Gospel has a natural and regular beginning at the third chapter, which is also the case with that of *Luke*, without the change of a single word; though there is not so much external evidence of *this* Gospel having been originally without its present introduction.

Mr. Evanson has suggested several new and valuable arguments against the miraculous conception,† for which I and others think ourselves greatly obliged to him. But we do not apprehend that he has by this means at all invalidated the authenticity of the rest of the Gospels of *Matthew* or

* *Dissonance*, p. 23. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, p. 41.

† See *Dissonance*, pp. 38—49, where Mr. Evanson thus concludes: "If this story of the preternatural origin of our Lord Jesus had been known and credited by the apostles and first preachers of Christianity, they also must have mentioned it in their discourses and letters of instruction to their converts, and instead of dwelling upon prophecies concerning the descent of the Messiah absolutely incompatible with so extraordinary a circumstance, without once alluding to it, they must have enumerated it amongst the necessary articles of a Christian's belief. Yet in no one apostolic Epistle, in no one discourse recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, is the miraculous conception, or any one circumstance of the history of Jesus previous to John's Baptism, hinted at even in the most distant manner: on the contrary, that baptism is repeatedly referred to and mentioned as the proper commencement of Evangelical instruction; and when the eleven apostles proceeded to elect a twelfth, to supply the place of Judas, the only qualification made essentially requisite in the candidates was, their having been eye-witnesses of our Lord's ministry from the Baptism of John to his Ascension." See *Ed.* 2, pp. 63—75.

Luke, which in their present state contain that account. Mr. Evanson himself is but too ready to suppose interpolations of passages in those books, the genuineness of which he admits. But that a passage is weak and injudicious is no good reason why it might not have been written in the age of the apostles, or by some of the apostles themselves. He admits the epistle of *Clemens Romanus* to be genuine; but he says, "Even that hath been evidently corrupted by an interpolation of the absurd Pagan fable of the Phœnix."* But absurd and *Pagan* as it is, what proofs has Mr. Evanson that *Clemens* might not believe it? I have no doubt but he did; and I see no reason why any other person, who must have been a Christian, should have inserted it. If the person who made the interpolation believed the story, why might not *Clemens* himself have believed it?

In the same arbitrary manner Mr. Evanson supposes the writings of *Luke* himself to have been interpolated. "There are some others," he says, "in each of his histories, which are liable to much reasonable distrust. Such, for instance, in his Gospel, is the story of the demoniac possessed by a legion of demons, who petitioned and were permitted to enter into the herd of swine; and in the Acts of the Apostles, the passage which says that diseases and lunacies were cured by handkerchiefs or aprons brought from Paul's body."†

If every person was thus at liberty to pick what he pleased out of ancient writings, as the young wife in the fable pulled up all the gray hairs out of the husband's head, and the old wife all the black ones, nothing might be left. If Mr. Evanson had scrutinized the Gospel of *Luke* with the same severity with which he has gone over those of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, he might have found so many objectionable passages, as to have pronounced them all equally spurious. For at present the difference is only in degree, the three Gospels being, according to Mr. Evanson, absolutely spurious, because, in his opinion, they contain many objectionable passages, and that of *Luke* only interpolated, though it contains a considerable number of them. But he should give some good reason for supposing that such writers as the apostles, and other unlearned primitive Christians, could not have written as they have done. That Mr. Evanson himself would not have written as they have done, is no evidence at all.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

Of Mr. Evanson's Objections to particular Passages in the Gospel of Matthew, as contradictory to Passages in the Gospel of Luke.

DEAR SIR,

I MIGHT have contented myself with the preceding general answer to Mr. Evanson's Objections to the authenticity of the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*. But to shew that I see nothing at all formidable in any of them, I shall fairly recite them all, not with a view to maintain the strict propriety of every thing that he objects to; for that is the business of the writers themselves, or their professed advocates; but to shew that, notwithstanding all his objections, they might have been written by the persons to whom they are usually ascribed.

These more particular objections to the Gospel of *Matthew* being numerous, I shall divide them into three heads, and make them the subjects of three separate Letters. The first shall comprise the passages that Mr. Evanson objects to as inconsistent with the Gospel of *Luke*; the second such as he conceives to be improbable in themselves; and the third, such of these articles as he thinks are particularly unworthy of our Saviour. Concerning the first, however, it is obvious to remark, that the contradictions no more affect the authenticity of the Gospel of *Matthew*, than they do that of *Luke*; but I do not think that they in the least affect that of either of them.

1. Instead of "Judas the—brother of James," as in *Luke*, [*Acts* i. 13,] *Matthew* [x. 3] has "Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus," which is said, as Mr. Evanson observes, to be "a Syrian word of much the same signification with Judas."* But whether this be the case or not, or whether we can discover any reason for it or not, we know it was no uncommon thing for the same persons to have more names than one, as *Matthew* and *Levi*, and what is not improbable, though on this Mr. Evanson founds an objection to the Gospel of *John*, *Nathanael* and *Bartholomew*. According to Mr. Evanson, *Silas* must have been called *Luke*, though no ancient writer tells us so.†

* *Dissonance*, p. 151. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 188, 189.

† Mr. Evanson suggests, "that Nathanael and Bartholomew" are not, "like *Silas* and *Luke*, of similar signification," and adds, "As I depend much more upon

2. "This whole story," Mr. Evanson says, "of the removal of Jesus from Nazareth to dwell at Capernaum, is in direct contradiction to the history of Luke. For he assures us, (*chap. iv.*), that the reason of our Lord's leaving Nazareth was because the inhabitants, offended with his discourse to them, drove him out of their city;" when he "went down to Capernaum, where he preached to the people for a short time;—but was so far from taking up his dwelling there, that, though the inhabitants entreated him to stay, and 'not depart from them,' he left them, saying, he must 'preach the kingdom of God to other cities also,' for that was the purpose of his mission."*

Now I see no real inconsistency between the two Evangelists; since *dwelling* does not necessarily mean taking a house, and living a number of years in it, but may mean Jesus making *Capernaum* the chief place of his resort, or where he was to be found more than in any other place; and the history shews that he was more there than any where else, and he might have been more there than any thing particularly recorded of him implies. Or the *removal* mentioned by *Matthew* may not mean so much that of Jesus himself, who does not appear ever to have had a house of his own to remove from, as that of Mary, and the rest of the family; so that if, when he began his public ministry, he could be said to have any home, it was there.

Luke says nothing at all of any removal from *Nazareth*, if by *removal* be meant *ceasing to dwell* there; but only of his not choosing to preach there. Nothing can be inferred from *Luke*, but that Jesus simply visited Nazareth as he did other places, in order to preach there at the time that he was rejected by the inhabitants of that place. There is no intimation of his having any house or home there at that time. On the contrary, it is clearly intimated by *Luke* himself, (*iv. 16.*) that the place of his residence, if he had any, was elsewhere: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up."

3. Mr. Evanson finds a contradiction between *Matthew*, [*iii. 7.*], who says of "the Baptist," that "many of the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees* came to this baptism;" and *Luke*, who "expressly assures us, (*vii. 30.*) that the *Pharisees* and

the testimony of Luke than on that of all the other Gospels, and all the fathers of the apostate church taken together, I am very far from being satisfied that Levi the publican was one of the apostles, or that Matthew the apostle ever was a publican." *Letter*, p. 45.

* *Dissonance*, pp. 132, 133. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 164, 165.

lawyers were not baptized of him. It is not possible," he says, "that both these contradictory assertions should be true; and on which the guilt of falsehood rests, every man must judge for himself."* But might not *some*, and even *many* of the Pharisees be baptized of *John*, though the *generality* of them were not? It is evident from *Matthew's* account of the conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees, at the time of his last visit to Jerusalem, that *he* did not consider the great body of the Pharisees as having been the disciples of *John*; for he makes them to say, (xxi. 25,) "If we shall say, from heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?" So that, if there be any inconsistency, it is in *Matthew* himself.

4. Mr. Evanson founds several of his objections on the Sermon on the Mount, and the circumstances in which it was delivered. He thinks "that so full and ample a moral lecture would have been postponed, at least, till all those who were to be his apostles were called to be his disciples, and actually appointed to their office," and "accordingly St. Luke informs us this really was the case."†

But where is the improbability in supposing Jesus to have given the same instructions at different times, and even to have repeated them very frequently? Besides, I think it not improbable, but that *Matthew*, having occasion to recite some of the moral lessons that Jesus delivered on this occasion, added to them others of a similar nature, delivered on other occasions, that every thing of the same kind might be found in the same place. This he has evidently done with respect to the instructions to the twelve previous to their first mission; for they contain several things which do not at all suit that occasion, but only their future mission after his death, as what relates to their being brought before kings, and their being exposed to persecution. Mr. Evanson might not have preferred this method, but *Matthew* did.

"From the first and last beatitude," Mr. Evanson says, "as well as from many entire passages of Luke, interwoven in different parts of this sermon, it is evident he had St. Luke's Gospel before him."‡ If this was the case, and if he had no other source of information concerning this discourse, why did he depart so much from it, and introduce it in so different a part of the history? But where is the great improbability of two writers having, in some measure, dif-

* *Dissonance*, p. 131. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 162, 163.

† *Ibid.* p. 138. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, p. 172.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 139. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, p. 173.

ferent sources of information, concerning a long discourse, giving even a more different account of it, at the distance of thirty years, than *Matthew* and *Luke* have done of this ?

5. Mr. Evanson supposes that because, according to *Matthew*, [v. 1,] this discourse was delivered on "a mountain," Jesus sat himself down on the very summit of it, "which, from its convex form, must necessarily prevent all but those who immediately surrounded him from either seeing or hearing him." He also ridicules the idea of his having "there set himself down before he began to teach them;" whereas "St. Luke, on the contrary, informs us, that 'he came down, and stood in the plain.'"* It is well known, however, that the usual posture of a Jewish teacher was sitting in an elevated place; and though this discourse is said to have been delivered on a mountain, all that was meant might be that it was in a mountainous part of the country, and there might be such hollow recesses about a mountain, as would give a speaker even a better opportunity of being well heard by a multitude than any situation on a plain. Had Mr. Evanson been as ingenious in solving difficulties, as he has been in finding them, *this* might have occurred to him.

6. With respect to what, according to *Matthew*, [v. 17,] Jesus says of his *not coming to destroy the law*, &c., Mr. Evanson says, it is "an assertion which flatly contradicts the prophets of the Old Testament, St. Luke, St. Paul, and the whole scope and intent of the gospel covenant."† But let Mr. Evanson prove that the gospel was intended to supersede the law of Moses with respect to the Jews, in answer to what I have urged in the *Theological Repository*.‡ I think I have sufficiently obviated all that he has advanced in this publication to the contrary. § Both our Saviour and the apostles strictly conformed to the law of Moses, and so

* *Dissonance*, p. 141. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 175.

† *Ibid.* (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 175.

‡ See Vol. XII. pp. 442—482.

§ Mr. Evanson refers to "St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians," (see Vol. XII. pp. 470, 471,) by which he considers his opponent's "system effectually and satisfactorily overthrown." He then strongly expresses his disapprobation of the opinion, "that when the predicted *New Jerusalem* has descended *from above* to bless all the nations of the earth with perfect freedom, the *Old Jerusalem* shall be restored to the Jews alone, and they again be subject to *bondage*; and that after the Jews themselves, together with all other nations, shall by their conversion to Christ have attained a rational, manly maturity of religious knowledge and wisdom under the new covenant of the gospel, they alone shall be sent back to school again, and submit for ever to the *childish discipline of the law of Moses*." *Letter*, p. 47. On the adaptation of "the Mosaic ritual" to "the future and final state of the world," see Vol. XII. p. 482.

did all the Jewish converts as late as we hear any thing of them.*

7. Mr. Evanson lays great stress on *Matthew's* supposing [vi. 5—13] that Jesus taught his disciples to pray, in a period of the history different from that in which *Luke* [xi. 1] introduces it.† But would *Matthew* have knowingly done this, if he had had the Gospel of *Luke* before him? And how does such a difference as this affect the character of either of the writers? The *doxology*, which is not annexed to the Lord's prayer of *Luke*, Mr. Evanson acknowledges to be an interpolation in *Matthew*.‡

8. There are circumstances of difference in the accounts that *Matthew* [viii. 5—13] and *Luke* [vii. 2—10] give of the healing of the "centurion's servant." But surely they will not bear the unfavourable construction that Mr. Evanson puts upon them. Those in *Matthew*, he says, "give the lie § to St. Luke's account of the same miracle. For he tells us that the centurion came to our Lord himself, and conversed with him in person; whereas St. Luke informs us that he only sent a deputation to him of the elders of the Jews, and declared that he did not think himself worthy to come to him, and consequently that he did not come himself. Here again one of these historians must relate a falsehood."|| This is harsh language. But the occasion did not call for it; since two very honest, and, in the main, well-informed men, might, at the distance of thirty years, relate a story substantially the same, with such a variation as this.

Both the Evangelists agree in saying that the person who applied to Jesus was a centurion; that the person in whose favour he applied was his servant; that the centurion expressed the greatest humility and respect in his mode of application, and even used the same language, borrowed from his situation, as a person in authority, and having the perfect command over his servants; that Jesus expressed his admiration of this, as coming from a *Heathen*; that the cure was performed without his going to the house; that the scene of the transaction was at *Capernaum*, and after Jesus

* See Vol. XIII. p. 75. † *Dissonance*, pp. 146, 147. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 181.

‡ "Though the orthodox church still continues to make use of it, the best critics have very satisfactorily shewn that it did not exist in the original copies of even this work; and, therefore, it must be the addition of some later copyist who understood not what Jesus meant by 'thy kingdom come,' and whose weak mind supposed the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth, like human sovereigns, to be pleased with fawning, flattering expressions, and superfluous, verbal acknowledgments of his power and greatness." *Ibid.* pp. 147, 148; *Ed.* 2, pp. 182, 183. See Vol. XIII. p. 83.

§ "Record the story with circumstances directly contradictory." *Ed.* 2.

|| *Dissonance*, p. 149. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 184.

was entered into the city. Of what consequence, then, are any other circumstances of difference? How does one of these historians "give the lie" to the other, and *convict the other of falsehood*? If they should meet, they would not treat one another in that manner.

9. Another difference between *Matthew* [xiv. 3—11] and *Luke*, [ix. 7—9,] to the great disparagement of the former, is *Matthew's* representing *Herod* as artfully drawn in by *Herodias* to consent to the death of *John the Baptist*; whereas Mr. Evanson says, that according to *Luke*, it was Herod's "own voluntary act."* But, in fact, *Luke* gives no account of any particulars relating to the death of *John*, so that he does not contradict *Matthew* (or *Mark*, [vi. 17—28,] who agrees with *Matthew*) at all. After *Luke* [iii. 19, 20] had mentioned Herod's having "shut up John in prison" on account of his reproving him "for Herodias his brother Philip's wife," all that occurs farther on the subject is Herod's saying, (ix. 9,) "John have I beheaded." Nor is his differing from *Josephus*† material. This is a censure without any foundation whatever.

10. Mr. Evanson finds much contradiction between *Matthew* [xxi] and *Luke*, [xix. 29—48,] in the circumstances which accompanied Jesus's last visit to Jerusalem. In the first place, he diverts himself with an humorous account of our Saviour's riding upon an ass. It is so curious, that I shall transcribe the whole. "The beginning of the twenty-first chapter contains the history of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem amidst the hosannas of the people, as predicted by the prophet Zechariah, 'meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass;' but this writer was so ignorant of the usual pleonasm and redundancy of the Hebrew idiom, that, misunderstanding the prophet, who only means to say that the promised king would come riding on an ass, and that the ass he should ride on would be a young one, or an ass's colt, he supposes him to predict his riding upon two asses; and therefore, to shew that the prophecy was more literally accomplished than St. Luke's history had shewn it to be, he informs us, our Lord sent two of his disciples to fetch an ass and a colt with her; that 'they brought the ass and

* *Dissonance*, p. 163. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 202.

† *Antiq. C.* xviii. Ch. v. Sect. ii. Josephus, says Mr. Evanson, "silent about the dancing daughter of Herodias, expressly assures us, that Herod, after he had imprisoned *John*, put him to death, because he was jealous of the great influence his character and preaching had upon the people, and because he thought it easier and more prudent by his death to prevent any insurrection upon his account, than to inflict the same punishment on him, after a tumult might be begun." *Ibid.* : *Ed.* 2, pp. 202, 203.

the colt, and put on *them* their clothes, and they set him upon *them*.' In what position either the writer himself, or those who for so many centuries have believed him to have been an apostle of Jesus Christ, conceived our Saviour to have been seated on two animals at a time, I pretend not to determine ; but surely a more glaring instance of the gross ignorance of the one, respecting the Jewish prophecies, and of the extreme credulity of the others, need not be produced ! !” *

As to *Matthew's* misapplying texts of scripture, I have already said what I think will be deemed satisfactory. And surely Mr. Evanson could not seriously suppose that *Matthew* meant to say, or to intimate, that Jesus rode upon both the asses at the same time. Had he looked into the various readings of *Matthew*, he would have found that, according to one copy, it was only on *one* of them that our Saviour rode, and according to the *Syriac* version, it was upon the colt only.† I am concerned to have occasion to notice such a little cavil as this.

11. Mr. Evanson lays great stress upon *Matthew* [xxiii. 39] making Jesus to say, after his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, “ ‘ For I say unto you, ye shall not see me *henceforth*, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.’ What meaning,” adds Mr. Evanson, “ the writer could intend to convey by these words, I cannot imagine ; because such a prediction given at the date which he has assigned to it, even according to his own history, was not completed, and was, therefore, absolutely false : for in the very next chapter he informs us, that as soon as our Saviour had so said, he left the temple and went out of the city to the Mount of Olives, from thence to Bethany, where he was a guest to Simon the Leper ; and though he returned again to Jerusalem to eat the passover, and was seen by the whole city during his examination before the council and before Pontius Pilate, and at his crucifixion, yet no such circumstance as is here predicted, is so much as said to have taken place.”‡ Now I acknowledge, that I cannot interpret this saying of our Saviour's, in this connexion, to my own satisfaction.§ But it is not, in my opinion, a difficulty of such magnitude as to affect the genuineness of the Gospel.

12. A very slight difference with respect to our Saviour's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem in favour, as Mr. Evanson thinks, of *Luke*, [xxi. 5—33,] has drawn from him

* *Dissonance*, pp. 171, 172. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 211, 212.

† See Vol. XIII. p. 276, Note †.

‡ *Dissonance*, p. 178. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 219.

§ See Vol. XIII. p. 293.

the following heavy censure of the Gospel of *Matthew* [xxiv. 1—44]: “There is another remarkable difference between these two writers in stating this prophecy; St. Luke informs us, that our Lord told his disciples *plainly*, that they needed not apprehend the ruin of the Jewish nation at the beginning of the insurrections and wars in Palestine, for it would be some years afterwards before that calamity would take place; but that when they should see Jerusalem itself invested with armies, then the fatal period was arrived, and they should lose no time in saving themselves from the general ruin by a speedy flight out of the devoted country; and there is every reason to believe, that the Christians actually profited by this plain and timely admonition: but this writer makes our Lord tell them to flee out of Judea, ‘when they shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel stand in the holy place, words to them absolutely unintelligible without an explanation, and which must, therefore, have rendered the prophetic warning entirely useless to them. And what could the author mean by adding, (*ver.* 22,) that ‘except those days should be shortened there should *no flesh* be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days should be shortened’? To what circumstances in the destruction of Jerusalem and the ruin of the Jewish nation can such a sentence refer?”*

Now where is the great difference between “the abomination of desolation” standing “in the holy place,” which, being the language of the original prophecy of *Daniel*, Jesus might choose to make use of, admitting it to signify, as it easily may, the appearance of the Roman standards, with the objects of their *Heathen* worship, that is, the march of the Roman armies into Judea, or the *Holy Land*, and the *investing of Jerusalem by their armies*?† Besides, if the Christians had stayed in the country, and especially in that city, till it was actually invested, they could not have escaped at all;‡ so that if there be any difference, it is clearly in favour of the language used by *Matthew*.

* *Dissonance*, pp. 210, 211. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 254, 255.

† Mr. Evanson replies, that “if the phrase *holy place* signifies the *Holy Land*, that is, the country of Palestine, since the Roman armies were actually within that land from the very commencement of the Jewish wars, the Christians, according to this interpretation, were warned to flee from the country of the Jews upon the first insurrection of their countrymen against the Romans; yet, according to Luke, they were not to expect that final ruin of the nation, which was the great object of the prophecy, till a considerable period after those wars began, nor until they should see Jerusalem itself formally besieged.” *Letter*, p. 48.

‡ “Josephus,” says Mr. Evanson, in reply, “informs us that, even during the siege, the inhabitants were invited and exhorted to escape from the city; and that great num-

13. *Matthew* [xxv. 28] says, that when Jesus gave the cup at the institution of his supper, he added to the words, *This is the New Testament in my blood*,* FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS; and because neither *Luke* [xxii. 20] nor *Paul* [1 Cor. xi. 25] say that he did so, he censures this writer as “having given encouragement to that fatal inefficacy of the moral influence of the Gospel, occasioned by representing the death of Jesus as a propitiatory sacrifice, and a satisfactory atonement for the sins of the whole world.”† But this doctrine, which I agree with Mr. Evan-son in thinking to be a very pernicious one, receives much more countenance from many other passages of scripture than it does from this, which, after all, is no contradiction to any thing in *Luke* or *Paul*; as they do not say that Jesus did *not* use those words. And no man, or writer, is answerable for a misconstruction of what he says.

From Mr. Evan-son’s account one would imagine, that the author of the Gospel of *Matthew* had been a professed advocate for the doctrine of atonement, and yet, except this one obscure expression, it will not be easy for him to find a single circumstance in it that can, by any construction, be made to give the least countenance to that doctrine; and there are many things in this Gospel decisively against it.

This writer does not represent either *John the Baptist*, or our Saviour, as ever teaching the doctrine of *atonement*, or any thing approaching to it. The whole subject of the preaching of *John* (*ch.* iii. 8) is repentance, and works meet for repentance. The whole of the Sermon on the Mount is a lesson of the purest morality; and in the Lord’s Prayer, included in it, [*ch.* vi. 9—13,] we are taught to pray to be forgiven as we ourselves forgive; and to this is added, (*vers.* 14, 15,) “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

In the parable of the king who took an account of his

bers did so, and were permitted by Titus to go freely whithersoever they pleased.” *Letter*, p. 48.

Mr. Evan-son refers, I apprehend, to a passage of *Josephus* in *War*, B. v. Ch. x. Sect. i., where, according to Whiston, the historian says, “Titus let a great number go away into the country, whither they pleased.” It is, however, immediately added, that “John and Simon, with their factions, did more carefully watch these men’s going out, than they did the coming in of the Romans; and if any one did but afford the least shadow of suspicion of such an intention, his throat was cut immediately.”

* Instead of “this is my blood of the New Testament.” Here Mr. Evan-son takes occasion to charge his opponent with a “misrepresentation.” *Letter*, p. 49.

† *Dissonance*, p. 185. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, p. 226.

servants, (*ch.* xviii. 23,) designed to illustrate the doctrine of forgiveness, the master is represented as forgiving his servant from compassion only, without any atonement or satisfaction made by himself, or any other person for him: *ver.* 27: "The Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt." To shew the extent of this principle, Jesus is represented as requiring that we should forgive our brethren not only seven times, but seventy times seven. *Ver.* 22.

Lastly, in the description of the day of judgment, (*ch.* xxv.,) the righteous are represented as received into favour not on account of any *atonement*, or satisfaction, that had been made for them, though so natural an occasion of mentioning it occurred from the circumstance of him that made the atonement being the judge; but only for their good works, which are particularly specified, so that the nature of them cannot be mistaken. And yet this is the book that, according to Mr. Evanson, was forged with a view to teach the doctrine of atonement.* If this was so, surely the author has managed his business very ill. And yet Mr. Evanson can say, "The doctrine of Christ's death being a full satisfaction to the Divine justice for all the sins and unrighteousness of men, is founded principally upon this fabulous and spurious Gospel called St. Matthew's."†

14. *Matthew*, Mr. Evanson says, "makes our Lord declare, that after he is risen, *he will go before his apostles into Galilee*, though St. Luke assures us, that after his resurrection he appeared to them all at Jerusalem; that he there daily conversed with them till his ascension; that, by his express command, they continued at Jerusalem from the passover to the feast of pentecost; and that the apostles abode there long after."‡ This, however, is no contradiction to any thing that is said by *Luke*, [xxiv. 36,] who only omits the circumstance noticed by *Matthew* [xxviii. 10]. Jesus might, and I doubt not did, appear to them in *Galilee*, where *John* (in a story uncommonly circumstantial and natural, such as could come from no other than a person present at the transaction) represents him (xxi. 1) as being, and yet ascend to heaven from the Mount of *Olives*, and *then* bid them continue in Jerusalem till the day of pentecost. As *Luke* says (*Acts* i. 3), that Jesus was "seen of the apos-

* Mr. Evanson replies, "that this Gospel was forged on purpose to teach that doctrine, is what I never asserted, nor thought." *Letter*, p. 49.

† *Dissonance*, p. 186. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, p. 228.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 188. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, p. 230.

ties forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," there is room enough for the journey to *Galilee*.

15. Mr. Evanson censures *Matthew's* account (xxvi. 36—39) of Jesus being "exceeding sorrowful" in the garden of *Gethsemane*, and his praying with so much earnestness, that the cup might *pass from him*. * But this does not appear to me to deserve any answer, as the evangelist only represents Jesus as feeling and praying in such a manner as any other pious man of great sensibility would have done in the same circumstances. † Mr. Evanson adds, "And after the offering up his reiterated prayers," he is represented as being "so very confused and discomposed, as to address his sleepy apostles in the following incoherent, irrational language: '*Sleep on now, and take your rest* ; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. *Rise, let us be going* ; behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." ‡ But suppose that, with many critics, we should interpret our Lord's language interrogatively, (as Mr. Evanson will not deny we are at full liberty to do, the pointing of the Scriptures being entirely arbitrary,) and render it, *Do ye still sleep and take your rest?* &c. § what becomes of his irony, which, if just, is highly improper and offensive? ||

16. Mr. Evanson lays great stress upon the difference between the account of *Matthew*, (xxvi. 57,) who represents the council, with the High Priests, as assembled *in the night*, and that of *Luke*, (xxii. 26,) who says it was "as soon as it was day." ¶ Suppose we compromise this difference, by supposing the meeting to have been held late in the night, and near morning.

17. Cavilling (for I cannot use any other expression) at the phrase *απ' αρτι*, *from this time*, which *Matthew* [xxvi. 64] prefixes to our Saviour's saying, "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," Mr. Evanson calls it "a prediction absolutely false, because the Jewish nation, from that time to this, have never *seen* any such thing, but still remain incredulous to his being the promised Christ." ** Whatever be the

* *Dissonance*, p. 189. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 231.

† See Vol. XIII. pp. 337, 338.

‡ *Dissonance*, p. 189. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 231.

§ See Vol. XIII. p. 339, *Note* †.

|| Mr. Evanson replies, "An *irony* was never intended by me. I have simply stated the express words of this Gospel on the occasion, and avowed my disbelief of them; because they are descriptive of a perturbation of mind highly improbable and unbecoming our Lord Jesus, as well as inconsistent with the account *Luke* gives us of the very same transaction." *Letter*, p. 50.

¶ *Dissonance*, pp. 189, 190. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 231, 232.

** *Ibid.* p. 191. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 233.

strict meaning of the expression, the *intention* of the writer evidently was, that the judges of Jesus, as well as all men, would, *hereafter*, or at the last day, see him coming in the clouds.* And the later he wrote, the more evident it must be that this, and nothing else, could be his meaning; for he as well as Mr. Evanson, must have known that the Jews had not, at the time of his writing, seen what he told them they should see.

18. Mr. Evanson says, that, according to *Matthew*, [xxvi. 69,] “Peter ‘sat without in the palace,’ where it was impossible for our Lord to look upon him, as St. Luke assures us he did.”† But supposing *Luke* [xxii. 61] not to have been mistaken with respect to this circumstance, the situation of the place in which the High Priests were assembled might be such as that, though *Peter* was in another room, *Jesus* might see him.‡ Unless Mr. Evanson had better information than any person at this day can have, of the situation of the rooms, he cannot be sure but that this might have been the case.

19. Mr. Evanson finds a contradiction between the accounts of *Matthew* and *Luke* with respect to the burial of Jesus,§ and many improbabilities in that of *Matthew*. “According to St. Luke, as soon as Jesus was dead, Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and begged his body; and hasted to bury it, because the sabbath, which began at sun-set, drew on; that his female disciples attended the burial, observed how his body was placed in the sepulchre, and returned and prepared spices and ointment to embalm it with, before the sabbath commenced; and then rested the sabbath-day according to the commandment. The pretended *Matthew*, however, tells us, that *when even was come*, that is, when the sabbath was actually begun, Joseph went to beg the body, took it down, wrapped it in linen, and buried it; and that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting over

* See Vol. XIII. p. 342. Mr. E. replies, “that such an expression cannot refer to the miraculous appearance of our Lord *at the last day*, after an interval of at least three thousand years. In Luke’s narrative,” he adds, “our Saviour’s answer plainly intimates, that he was not *then* actually constituted *the Christ*; but that, immediately after they had put him to death, the time of their doing which was *then* arrived, he should be exalted to that glorious character predicted by their prophets, and invested with that power which he accordingly displayed in the supernatural gifts of the holy inspiration; in his revelations to John and Paul; in the severe judgments inflicted on Jerusalem and the Jewish nation in general; and which he has displayed and will continue to display in those equally severe judgments that have been and still remain to be inflicted upon apostate Christendom, previous to the general establishment of his new covenant in the world.” *Letter*, pp. 51, 52.

† *Dissonance*, pp. 191, 192. (P.) See *Ed.* 2, pp. 233, 234.

‡ See Vol. XIII. p. 342.

§ See *ibid.* pp. 363—368.

against the sepulchre. From the time this writer has thought fit to allot for the burial of our Saviour, it is evident that he was not only no Jew himself, but so ignorant of the customs of the Jews, that he did not know their day always began with the evening ; or he could never have employed Joseph in doing what no Jew would, nor dared, to have done, after the commencement of the sabbath. He takes no notice at all of the preparation made by the women to embalm the body ; for that would not have agreed with the sequel of his truly wonderful story ; but, to make up for that omission, he informs us of a circumstance with which St. Luke's history shews us *he* was perfectly unacquainted ; for he tells us that *the next day that followed the preparation*—such is the periphrasis that he uses for the sabbath-day ! It is well known that amongst the Jews it was customary to prepare and set out in the afternoon of the Friday all the food and necessaries for every family during the sabbath-day, because they were forbid to light a fire or do any the most trifling servile work on that day ; and therefore Friday was very properly called the day of preparation ; but it appears to me next to impossible, that any Jew, or any other person who had been accustomed to keep the sabbath as a religious ordinance, should call the sabbath *the day that followed the preparation* : yet this singular historian so denominates it, and goes on to inform us, that the Chief Priests and Pharisees went to Pilate to ask for a guard to be placed round the sepulchre till the third day, to prevent his disciples from stealing away his body, and then saying he was risen from the dead ; and that after obtaining the governor's permission, they went and secured the sepulchre by sealing the stone that was rolled against it, and setting a watch. Here it is wonderful that the Jewish rulers should, in so public a manner, thus violate the precept for observing the sabbath-day ; more wonderful, that they should have so much better attended to and comprehended the meaning of our Lord's prediction of his rising to life again than any of his own disciples did ; and most wonderful, that a Roman Proconsul should consent to let his troops keep watch round a tomb, for fear it should be thought that a dead man was come to life again. But though our author's history of these extraordinary facts is neither consistent with reason and probability, nor with any other history of the same event, it proceeds in pretty strict conformity to the manner in which it sets out ; for, to convince us still more fully that the author was totally ignorant of the mode of computing time in use amongst the Jews

and habituated to that used by the Greeks and Romans, he reckons the sabbath to last till day-light on the Sunday morning, and says (*ch. xxviii.*), that "in the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," the two Marys before-mentioned came not, as according to St. Luke, to embalm the body, for, with a guard round the sepulchre, that must have been impracticable, but *to see the sepulchre.*" *

If by *the evening being come* Mr. Evanson could suppose so ancient a writer as *Matthew* to mean at the approach of the evening, but while it was yet day, which is no great latitude of interpretation, his first objection would vanish. But the Jewish evening began at our three in the afternoon,† for that was the time of the evening sacrifice, and there was time enough between that and sun-setting for all that Joseph is supposed to have done. Besides, I apprehend the Jews did not keep their sabbath with so much strictness as Mr. Evanson imagines. I have proved him to be mistaken in his opinion that they never *feasted* on that day;‡ and as they professedly performed many works of *necessity* on that day, I think it very possible that they would bury a corpse on it. Neither do I see that the strictest *Pharisees* would think it a violation of the rest of the sabbath to apply to *Pilate* for a guard of the sepulchre. They did not consider either walking to a small distance, or speaking, as a violation of that rest. §

That the *Pharisees* should understand Jesus to mean a literal death, and a literal resurrection, when his disciples did not, appears to me not at all extraordinary; because the disciples of Jesus were in daily expectation of his being advanced to a state of kingly power and dignity; and being accustomed to his figurative and enigmatical way of speak-

* *Dissonance*, pp. 197—200. (*P.*) *Ed. 2*, pp. 240—243.

† On *John xx. 19—23*, *Lardner* says, "The first evening, according to Jewish computation, began at three after noon, and ended at six after noon or sun-setting. Of this use of the word we have divers examples in the New Testament." *Works*, XI. p. 193.

‡ "I want nothing," replies Mr. Evanson, "but the books of the old Testament to satisfy me that, if they do so, they must violate the law given them by Moses; but I made the inquiry into their present custom, from a rational, moral Jew, who seems seriously attached to his religion from principle, by stating the case to him in Dr. Priestley's own words. His answer was, that 'the gentleman was greatly mistaken; for that they never made a feast for guests on a sabbath-day except when one of their family was circumcised on that day:' which must sometimes happen, and which exception itself is made in obedience to the law of Moses." *Letter*, p. 53. Yet see *supra*, p. 351.

§ Mr. Evanson contends that "carrying the materials necessary for sealing the door of the sepulchre, and in conversing about and transacting business relative to the watch," would have been so considered. *Letter*, p. 53.

ing, they would not, in this case, be disposed to think that he could mean a literal death, or a literal resurrection.

That Mr. Evanson interprets too rigorously the Jewish mode of fixing the termination of day and night is to me very evident; and that, in a familar way of speaking, the Jews would say that the day ended with day-light, and that it began with the day-break, Dr. Lardner has sufficiently proved.

Such are the glaring contradictions between *Matthew* and *Luke*, sufficient, in Mr. Evanson's opinion, to invalidate the testimony of the former, and authorize us to conclude that the Gospel ascribed to him could not be written by him, by any person of the apostolic age, or by any credible witness whatever. You, Sir, however, I imagine, will now be of a very different opinion.

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

Of the Ignorance and Inconsistencies that Mr. Evanson imagines he has discovered in the Gospel according to Matthew.

DEAR SIR,

LET us now see what Mr. Evanson has to object to the Gospel of *Matthew* with respect to his ignorance of what, as an *apostle* and an *eye-witness*, he ought to have known.

1. Had there been any considerable mistake with respect to *geography* in the Gospel of *Matthew*, it must have been discovered by *Origen*, *Eusebius*, *Jerome*, and other learned Christians in early times, who actually lived in, or frequently visited, the country. But as neither they, nor any other of the ancients, have noticed any thing of the kind, either by way of illustration, or in answer to *unbelievers*, we may safely conclude that no such inaccuracies exist.

Mr. Evanson, however, finds "in the fourth chapter, vers. 13, 14, 15, another remarkable instance of *this* author's very imperfect knowledge of the geography of Palestine, which cannot be supposed of any native of the country; as well as another direct contradiction to the much more probable account given us by *Luke*. As if he imagined the city Nazareth was not as properly in Galilee, as Capernaum was, (which, indeed, seems implied also in the second chapter, where he tells us Joseph 'went aside,' not into Galilee, but 'into the

parts or coasts of Galilee,') he informs us, that after John's imprisonment our Saviour 'departed into Galilee, and leaving Nazareth, came and dwelt at Capernaum,' in order to fulfil a saying of Isaiah's respecting the country *beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles*. Now to Isaiah, or any inhabitant of Judea, the country *beyond* must be the country *east* of Jordan, as Gaulonitis or Galilee of the Gentiles is well known to have been, whereas Capernaum was a city on the *western* side of the lake of Gennesaret, through which the Jordan flows." *

I have nothing to do with the defence of the two first chapters of this Gospel, nor should Mr. Evanson have taken it for granted that they were written by the author of the rest of the Gospel of *Matthew*. But it is evident that the phrase "into the parts, or coasts of Galilee," means the *extreme parts* of the country so called; and in this situation *Capernaum* was. And by the phrase "beyond Jordan," Bishop Pearce has shewn that we are to understand the country *contiguous to the river*, † on whichever side it was. *Palestine* comprised the country on both sides of this river, and the same part that was on the *West* side, with respect to some of the inhabitants, would to others be on the *East*, and *vice versâ*. The prophecy of *Isaiah* certainly respects the whole of *Galilee*, both the parts contiguous to *Jordan*, and those that were not; for they were all exposed to the invasion of the Assyrians.

2. Mr. Evanson continues his charge of ignorance of the geography of *Palestine* on the author of the Gospel of *Matthew*, &c. by adding that he speaks of *Decapolis*, "not only as a particular country, or province, but as a country which did not lie eastward of the Jordan, because he expressly distinguishes it from 'the country *beyond Jordan*;' and the writer called St. Mark, speaking of the same *Decapolis*, (*ch. vii. 3.*) more than insinuates that it was a country lying north-west of the Sea of Galilee." ‡ And because "no such country as *Decapolis* is once mentioned by any other writer of either Testament," because Josephus does not "once mention the name before Vespasian was governor of Syria, and then only says that 'Scythopolis was the largest city of

* *Dissonance*, pp. 131, 132. (P.) *Ed. 2*, p. 164.

† "He only says," replies Mr. Evanson, "that in order to make the Gospels of Matthew and John consistent with probability and geographical truth, the preposition must be so understood in three or four passages of those writings, and not according to its usual acceptation." *Letter*, p. 55. See Vol. XIII. p. 65.

‡ *Dissonance*, p. 135. (P.) *Ed. 2*, pp. 165, 166.

Decapolis :’” and because this district is not mentioned in any division of the country by the Romans, “it is natural,” Mr. Evanson thinks, “to conclude that for some particular motives the Romans had been induced to annex ten Jewish cities to the government of Syria ; and that before that period the very name Decapolis did not exist.” *

From these circumstances, and others of no more weight than these, Mr. Evanson says, “that to talk of any person’s going to or coming from the Decapolis, without specifying which of the ten cities is meant, is to use a language devoid of meaning and perfectly unintelligible : and to speak of it as a province, like Galilee or Trachonitis, and as being situated north-west of the Sea of Galilee, is to betray an ignorance of the geography of Palestine too gross to be attributed to any native of that country ; and shews that the authors were not primitive disciples of Jesus Christ, but writers of a much later date, who, being personally unacquainted with the country, adopted a term they had heard applied to it, whose signification they did not understand.” †

Now it is a sufficient justification of *Matthew’s* distinguishing *Decapolis*, from the *country beyond*, or contiguous to, *Jordan*, that the greatest part of this district was not near Jordan, but to the east of the Sea of Galilee. That the term *Decapolis* was not known at the time in which *Matthew* and *Mark* wrote, viz. A. D. 64, is a mere conjecture of Mr. Evanson’s from a circumstance that affords no foundation for it. And if *Josephus* gives this district this appropriate name, in treating of the Jewish war, which immediately succeeded the writing of the Gospels, which he does in several passages, where can be the improbability of its having that name in their time ? The term may not occur in any general division of the country by the Romans, because it was but a small territory, comprehended in one of the larger ones. Besides, if the Romans did remove these ten cities from one jurisdiction to another, (for which Mr. Evanson produces no authority at all,) it is rather probable that they had before this time, for some reason or other, been classed together, and had obtained this common appellation.

That this was the case seems evident from a passage in the life of *Josephus*, written by himself. Addressing himself to one *Justus*, who had accused him and the Galileans of being the authors of the war, he says, “For before I was appointed governor of Galilee,—both thou, and all the peo-

* *Dissanance*, pp. 133—136. *Ed.* 2, pp. 166—169.

† *Ibid.* pp. 136, 137. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 169, 170.

ple of Tiberias, had not only taken up arms, but had made war with *Decapolis* of *Syria*. Nor is it I only who say this, but so it is written in the Commentaries of *Vespasian* the emperor, as also how the inhabitants of *Decapolis* came clamouring to *Vespasian* at *Ptolemais*.* Is it not natural to infer from this, that *Decapolis* was no new term in *geography*, but rather one of long standing?

The term *Decapolis* being used by *Josephus* without any explanation, shews that, in his time, it was well known, and needed no explanation, which otherwise he would naturally have added, and have said *the ten cities situated so and so*.

3. Mr. Evanson taxes the author of the Gospel of *Matthew* with great ignorance, in not distinguishing between *Judea* and the country "beyond *Jordan*." "It should be observed, also, that in the introduction to this curious discourse, the writer again betrays the grossest ignorance of the geography of the country; for he says it passed when our Saviour 'leaving *Galilee*, came into the coasts of *Judea beyond Jordan*;' though the *Jordan* was the eastern boundary of both the Jewish and Roman province of *Judea*, and consequently no part of it was *beyond the Jordan*."† But if no other writer should be found who has called all the country belonging to the Jews south of *Samaria* by the name of *Judea*, to distinguish it from *Galilee*, which was to the north, this inattention to geographical accuracy is of no great magnitude.

But it cannot well be doubted that by *Judea* was meant all the southern part of the country possessed by the Jews, on both sides the *Jordan*, by *Luke* himself, as well as the other writers of the *New Testament*; as when our Saviour says, *Luke* xxi. 21, "Let them that be in *Judea* flee to the mountains;" *Acts* i. 8: "Ye shall be witnesses to me—in all *Judea*;" and ix. 31: "Then had the churches rest throughout all *Judea*," &c. &c. It cannot be supposed that, in these passages, the country "*beyond Jordan*" was considered by the writer as excluded, when it was in the very same circumstances with the country on *this* side of it.

* Section 65. (P.) Whiston's *Translation*, (p. 679,) who refers to *Sect.* 74, where he translates, "When *Vespasian* was come to *Ptolemais*, the chief men of *Decapolis* of *Syria* made a clamour against *Justus* of *Tiberias*, because he had set their villages on fire." (P. 683.) Whiston also translates, *War*, (iii. 9, 7,) that *Vespasian* "sent away his son *Titus* to *Cesarea*, that he might bring the army that lay there to *Scythopolis*, which is the largest city in *Decapolis*." Mr. Evanson contends, except in this "one case," that "the original has *the ten cities*, and that *Josephus* never uses the term *Decapolis*." *Letter*, p. 56.

† *Dissonance*, p. 169. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 209.

4. "As to the account of the transfiguration," Mr. Evan-son says, "it is so absolutely contradictory to the repeated doctrine of the gospel, that Jesus was the first man whom God raised from the dead, that it cannot be a true authentic story. For whatever may be thought of Elias, Moses, we are expressly assured, *died* and was *buried*." *

The history of the transfiguration is attested by *Peter* and *Luke*, as well as by *Matthew* and *Mark*; so that Mr. Evan-son might as well reject any other part of the gospel history; and I own I can have no opinion of any man's judgment who can decide on a subject of this consequence in so very arbitrary and unwarrantable a manner; his objection to the story is so trifling.† Christ is, no doubt, called [1 *Cor.* xv. 20] "the first-fruits from the dead," and I believe he was so. But suppose that, strictly speaking, he had not been so, and that *Paul*, who said it, had not at the time attended to the circumstance of *Moses*, as well as *Elias*, appearing to Jesus, nothing would have followed but the supposition of a slight inadvertence in the writer, which would have been far more probable than that of such a story as that of the transfiguration, related by three evangelists, and attested by *Peter*, not being true. If Mr. Evan-son object to all these authorities, he has at least the difficulty of accounting for the writings which bear their names being forged. But it does not follow that *Moses* ever died, merely because the author of the last chapter of *Deuteronomy*, who could not know the fact, thought so. Nobody was present when *Moses* died, nor could the place of his burial be found, and he went up to the mountain in full health and vigour. The Jews naturally supposed that *Moses* died, as *Aaron* did before him, though he might be translated, as *Elijah* was; and this I am inclined to believe was the case.‡

5. *Matthew*, giving an account of Jesus being followed by great multitudes, when the Pharisees had held a council to destroy him, says, (xii. 16,) that he "charged them that they should not make him known." This Mr. Evan-son calls an "unreasonable absurdity."§ Indeed, the injunction appears not likely to have any effect. But we cannot, at this distance, pretend to judge of all the circumstances of the story,

* *Dissonance*, p. 56, Note. (P.) Omitted *Ed.* 2, p. 81.

† Mr. Evan-son considers "this objection—still farther strengthened by another difficulty suggested in the very same note. For in this story of the transfiguration, as well as in that of the baptism of Jesus, he is miraculously called the *Son of God* before his death; though till after that event he always disclaimed that title, calling himself only *Son of Man*, as he really was." *Letter*, p. 58.

‡ See Vol. XI. p. 303.

§ *Dissonance*, p. 155. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 190, 191.

and some of them might make it more probable than we may now imagine. However, it is such a circumstance as a person who did not write from his knowledge of the fact would hardly have introduced into his narrative ; so that it is far from answering Mr. Evanson's purpose, of representing the Gospel of *Matthew* as a spurious work, of a late date.*

6. A man must have a very strong propensity to cavil who can object to several of the miracles recorded in *Matthew's* Gospel, as Mr. Evanson does in the following passage : " In reviewing the miracles of Jesus recorded by this writer, we find most of them, like those of St. Luke, works of mercy and benevolence ; only he relates more of them, and with a view, no doubt, to aggrandize the miracle, it is observable, that he frequently doubles the object or the malady to be healed, making two where St. Luke mentions but one ; or making the demoniac, that St. Luke tells us was dumb, both blind and dumb also. But there are a few of a very different kind related by this author, of which St. Luke makes not the least mention ; those are, *ch. xiv.*, our Saviour's walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee, in the night time, to overtake his disciples, whom he had '*constrained* to get into a ship to go before him unto the other side,' though as the ship was detained by contrary winds in the midst of the sea, till he came to them, their embarking seems to have answered no end, except the display of his supernatural power in this singular miracle ; and his curing all the maladies of the people of Gennesaret, by letting them only touch the hem of his garment ; *ch. xvii.*, his paying tribute at Capernaum, by directing Peter to take the required piece of money out of a fish's mouth, where the miracle is rendered the more wonderful by the fish's being able to hold the money fast in its mouth till Peter took it out, though it was caught and pulled up with a hook and line ; and, *ch. xxi.*, the cursing the fig-tree because he found no fruit on it, wherewith to mitigate his hunger. Whether such miracles as these are suitable to the character of Jesus Christ ; and whether it be any disparagement to the Gospel according to St. Luke, that they are not to be found in it, I leave to the candid reader to determine." †

I see nothing deserving of a particular answer in all this. Only I cannot help observing the different impression that

* Of this remark Mr. Evanson takes no notice, but contents himself with saying, "To article 5, the Doctor himself acknowledges he knows not what to answer." *Letter*, p. 58.

† *Dissonance*, pp. 206, 207. (*P.*) *Ed. 2*, pp. 249, 250.

the same images make on different minds. What Mr. Evanson treats with contempt, as absolutely incredible, I look upon with reverence, and without the least disposition to incredulity. Nor do I think it becomes a serious mind to treat things held sacred by so many persons with such indecent levity.

7. Among many extraordinary things in this work of Mr. Evanson's, is his objecting to the Gospel of *Matthew* [iii. 2], on account of the writer of it appearing to him to contradict the account of *Luke* with respect to the time of the commencement of "the kingdom of heaven," or the gospel dispensation, in consequence of his representing *John the Baptist* as preaching that "the kingdom of heaven *was* at hand." "If," says he, "this account were true, then Jesus and his apostles could not be the first preachers of the gospel; for these are the very words they use to announce the commencement of the gospel covenant to the Jews; but St. Luke informs us, not only in the parallel place of his first history, [iii. 3,] but also in the speech of St. Paul, related Acts xix. 4, that John only 'preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;' and since our Saviour tells the Jews, (Luke xvi. 16,) that the law and the prophets, that is, the Mosaic covenant, subsisted until John; but that since John's time, the new covenant of the kingdom of God was preached; we may be certain that John's mission was only preparatory to that of Jesus; and that Jesus was the first promulger of the gospel covenant, and of the supersession of the old covenant, by the commencement of the kingdom of God, or, as this author calls it, the kingdom of heaven, in the world. This passage therefore is one, and as we proceed, there will be occasion to point out several other proofs that the writer of this history, whoever he was, did not understand the phrase *kingdom of God*, or *of heaven*, in the sense in which only it is used by our Lord himself in the prayer he taught his disciples, by St. Luke, and by every other primitive preacher of the gospel."*

Admitting that "the kingdom of God" properly commenced with the preaching of Jesus, *John* did not precede him so far, but that he might with strict truth say, that this kingdom *was at hand*. Besides, our Saviour himself used the same language, as if the proper commencement of this kingdom was at some distance; and, according to his own account, this kingdom does not commence before he will come from heaven with power and great glory. Conse-

quently, with respect to the preaching of Jesus, as well as that of *John*, the kingdom of God was a future event, and therefore they might both very properly use the same language respecting it.

In another place Mr. Evanson cavils at *Matthew*, [xiii. 24,] for representing our Saviour as comparing the kingdom of heaven to "a man *who* sowed good seed in his field." "What idea," he says, "must this writer have formed to himself of the meaning of *the kingdom of heaven*, that he could think of likening it to an husbandman? The kingdom of heaven, or, as it is always called by other writers, of God, or of Christ, as that phrase is used by Jesus in the prayer he taught his disciples, by Luke, Paul, and John in the Apocalypse, uniformly signifies, as I have before observed, the dutiful state of submission and obedience of mankind to the terms of the new covenant of the gospel: and what similitude can there be between such a state of the world and the husbandman in this parable?"*

But is there nothing in this beautiful parable representing "the kingdom of heaven," if, in any sense, this kingdom means *the gospel*, when the corruptions introduced into it are so happily described by the sowing of tares among the wheat? But it will not, I apprehend, be very easy for Mr. Evanson to prove that he has entertained a just idea of the kingdom of heaven, which, according to *Daniel*, by whom it was first announced, will not take place before the destruction of the present kingdoms of this world, though the preaching of the gospel, as preparing the way for it, may, in a sufficiently proper sense, be so called.†

Mr. Evanson, indeed, says, "By the writer's giving that appellation to the future existence of the virtuous in a state of happiness and immortality in heaven, it is manifest that, whoever he was, he did not understand our Saviour's meaning in that expression so frequently used by him, and so peculiar to his gospel; for, besides that no other writer of the New Testament uses it in that sense, the obvious meaning of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer, and of all the prophecies of both Testaments relating to the Messiah, or Christ, makes it refer merely to the state of human affairs in the present world, and not to that future state which is to succeed the general resurrection: and instead of teaching us, like this parable, that sin and wickedness will continue amongst men to the end of this world, all the other scrip-

* *Dissonance*, p. 158. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 196, 197.

† See Vol. XII. pp. 314, 315; XIII. pp. 24, 121.

tures assure us, that the very purpose of the mission of Christ and the preaching his gospel is to eradicate and put an end to the growth of these tares of vice and iniquity ; and that the reformed state of mankind in the present world, under the universal influence of the righteousness and moral virtue of the gospel, is what is peculiarly denominated *the kingdom of God*, or of his Christ. Who, then, can believe that an apostle of Jesus Christ could either be so ignorant of the great end and design of the gospel, or so culpably daring as to put into the mouth of our blessed Saviour a doctrine so absurdly false and impious as is taught us in this parable, and so directly contradictory to every idea given us of the new covenant of the Messiah by all the other sacred writers, whether Jews or Christians ?”* *Matthew*, he says, “ since he considered all the professed Christians of his own time to be called, and was sensible that but few of them, in comparison of the whole number, were really virtuous, good men ; and ignorantly supposed, that such would be the state of the Christian religion to the end of the world ; it was natural for him to conclude, that those whom God would finally approve at the day of judgment, would be very few indeed. But had he been an apostle of Jesus Christ, or had he understood the gospel meaning of *the kingdom of God*, or the sense of the old prophecies respecting the state of the world under the new covenant of the Messiah, he would have known, that no immoral, bad man could be a member of the true church of Christ, whatever his profession might be, and that, therefore, the whole congregation of faithful Christians are denominated the chosen or elect of God ; and instead of their being found to be few at the day of general judgment and retribution, he would have known also, that the very end and design of the religion of Jesus Christ is *to bless all the families of the earth* with the happy effects of its moral influence in the present life ; and that, when the marriage of the king’s son really takes place, righteousness will overspread the earth as completely *as the waters cover the sea*.”† On the same account, Mr. Evanson objects to the first parable of the ten virgins in the twenty-fifth chapter of *Matthew*. “ Here again,” he says, “ we have a just representation of the state of mankind in general, under every other system of religion ; but not at all suited to the circumstances that are predicted of the world, under the gospel covenant, when it is become *the kingdom*

* *Dissonance*, pp. 160—162. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 199—201.

† *Ibid.* pp. 175, 176. *Ed.* 2, pp. 216, 217.

of God. This parable, therefore, is another proof that the writer either did not comprehend, or, at least, did not believe the universal, moral reformation of that prophetic state of man in the present life ; and, consequently, that he was not an apostle of Jesus Christ.*

Now it happens unfortunately for Mr. Evanson, that *Luke* himself, in a discourse ascribed by him to our Saviour, gives countenance to the idea of the great prevalence of unbelief, and, consequently, as we must suppose, of vice and wickedness, before his second coming. For he makes him say, (xviii. 8,) “ Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith in the earth ? ” †

It is easy to shew that, according to *Luke*, as well as the other evangelists, the proper “ kingdom of God,” or of Christ, is something different from that mere prevalence of virtue in which Mr. Evanson supposes it to consist, though *this* will accompany it, and be promoted by it ; and also that the commencement of it was posterior to the preaching of Christ. When the disciples *expected*, (xix. 11,) “ that the kingdom of God *would* immediately appear,” Jesus recited the parable of “ a certain nobleman,” who “ went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return,” and he did not receive the kingdom till his return. In the prophecy of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, which was not to take place before forty years after his death, Jesus tells his disciples, (xxi. 31,) that when they should see certain “ things come to pass,” they were to “ know that the kingdom of God ” was only “ nigh at hand ; ” and the commencement of this kingdom is there denoted (ver. 27) by “ the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory.”

In this kingdom the apostles are to reign with Christ. xxii. 29, 30 : “ And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as the Father has appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” This is certainly a very different kingdom from what Mr. Evanson imagines that of Christ to be ; ‡ and because the writer of the Gospel of *Matthew*

* *Dissonance*, p. 179. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 220.

† See Vol. XIII. p. 253.

‡ Mr. Evanson, still contending that “ in all the authentic Scriptures the phrase *kingdom of God* uniformly signifies the establishment of the new covenant of the gospel in the hearts of men,” says, “ that kingdom could not commence till Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, was constituted the Messiah, Christ, or King of it, which was not till after his resurrection ; nor will it be perfected and correspond to the magnificent ideas given of it in all the prophecies, till what is emphatically called *our Lord's coming* shall take place. In the mean time, as soon as ever the

had not the same idea of it, he is unsparing of his abuse of him. In *Luke*, Mr. Evanson will, perhaps, consider the passages quoted above, which agree so well with *Matthew*, as interpolations.

8. Because in the parable of "a certain king who made a marriage *feast* for his son," *Matthew* [xxii. 2] represents the invitation as given to both good and bad, after the intended guests had declined accepting the invitation, Mr. Evanson says, "This author, who, I have no doubt, wrote long after the destruction of Jerusalem, makes the invitation of the Gentiles to accept the gospel covenant, posterior to that calamity. The parable, therefore, in the first seven verses, refers only to the preaching the new covenant to the Jews; describes their cruel persecution of the apostles and first preachers of the gospel, and the vengeance inflicted on them by heaven, in the utter ruin of their city and nation; *after which* the messengers of the gospel are ordered to go and preach it to the Gentiles. The manner, however, in which that is done in the parable, shews that the writer did not live in the age of St. Matthew, but at a time when Christianity was, with great numbers, a mere external profession, and the state of the church so corrupt, that the majority of its members were bad men: for he tells us, the king's servants furnished the wedding with guests by collecting together as 'many as they found, *both bad and good.*' This is a pretty accurate description of the state of *professed* Christianity, as it is at present, and as I am well convinced it was in the age of this writer, and has been ever since; but nothing can be more unlike the state of the true church of Christ, as it was founded by Matthew and the other apostles, and as, where it subsists at all, it must for ever continue to be: for the apostles and first preachers of the gospel were so far from admitting bad men into the Christian society, that St. Paul strictly enjoins the Gentile converts, (1 *Cor.* v. 11,) not to suffer any man who was guilty of any of the vices prohibited in the Gospel, to remain a member of their community, nor to associate, nor even so much as to eat with him."*

According to this reasoning of Mr. Evanson, our Saviour could not foretell the future state of his church, and no

new covenant of that kingdom was published to the world by his apostles and first disciples, he displayed many visible, supernatural instances of the regal power with which God had invested him, in communicating to them the miraculous gifts of the holy inspiration, and sundry revelations of the Divine will respecting the future state of human affairs." *Letter*, p. 59.

* *Dissonance*, pp. 174, 175. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 214—216.

writer can record any prediction who has not seen the accomplishment of it. As to the latter part of Mr. Evan-son's remark, the epistles of *Paul* furnish abundant proof, that there were persons addicted to many immoral practices among the first converts to Christianity, and that the belief of it operated gradually to the reformation of them.

9. Equally unreasonable is Mr. Evan-son's cavilling at the punishment of the man who did not appear in "a wedding garment," though he had been pressed to attend the feast. "With respect to the guest *who had not on a wedding garment*, whatever the author meant by that figurative expression, though the man, it seems, had nothing to say for himself, one cannot help pitying him: because, from the circumstances of the parable, he appears to have been in a manner *pressed* to attend at the marriage feast; and if any particular robe was necessary, since the king's servants must see that he had none, they ought either to have supplied him with one, or not to have invited him at all; and it seems rather hard, that, in consequence of their inattention or neglect, the unhappy wretch should be *bound hand and foot, and thrown into outer darkness, there to remain weeping and gnashing his teeth.*"*

Now it is well known to have been the custom in the *East*, for the master of the feast to provide such garments; and therefore that this man's not putting it on must have been a mark of contempt.† This, however, is not like a circumstance that any writer would *invent*.

10. Mr. Evan-son finds many contradictions between *Matthew's* account of Jesus' eating the last passover and the institution of his supper, and that of *Luke*; and, as usual, greatly to the discredit of that of *Matthew*, as in the highest degree improbable. "The writer called Matthew," he says, "on the contrary, who, instead of being a Jew himself, appears to have been very imperfectly acquainted with either the prophecies or customs of the Jews, takes not the least notice of the cup preceding the supper; and in telling us that the apology for his own not drinking of the wine was made by Jesus at the grace-cup, when he ordained the ceremony of the Lord's supper, he really betrays his own ignorance by teaching us that he did not begin the feast, as was customary, with the cup; for if he did, and the apology

* *Dissonance*, pp. 176, 177. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 217, 218.

† See Vol. XIII. p. 287. *Wakefield* says, "In some countries, it was customary for the bride to furnish her companions with marriage-dresses, like her own." *St. Matthew*, 1782, p. 301.

for his not drinking of it himself was given then, there could be no propriety in his repeating it so soon after, at the grace-cup; especially when we consider that the latter was proposed to them as a commencement of that commemorative rite of which he was to be the object, not the partaker: whereas the participation of the cup before the supper was the common form of beginning the paschal feast, which, as a Jew, concerned him as much as his disciples.”*

For this extraordinary remark the narrative of *Matthew* [xxvi. 17—29] furnishes no handle whatever; as he does not profess to relate any particulars of the *paschal supper*, but only the institution of the *Lord's supper*, with which it concluded. And when, in this rite, Jesus had tasted the wine for the last time, he very naturally observed, [ver. 29,] that he should not drink any more wine in this world, or state. It appears to me that this declaration of Jesus is put by *Luke* [xxii. 18] out of its proper place, because, according to this evangelist himself, [vers. 19, 20,] he partook both of the bread and the wine after it.† But I should not infer from this oversight, or mistake, whichever it was, that the Gospel of *Luke* was not authentic.

11. Mr. Evanson thinks some circumstances relating to the behaviour of *Pilate* to Jesus, as related by *Matthew*, [xxvii. 26—31,] to be improbable. “I cannot forbear remarking,” he says, “that as *Pilate* was convinced of our Lord's innocence and inoffensive behaviour, and sacrificed him to the clamorous entreaties of the Jews, against his own judgment and inclination, it is not at all consistent with the polished humanity of the Romans, that he should have subjected him to any unnecessary, barbarous, and cruelly insulting treatment from the Roman soldiers; that, according to St. *Luke*, the gorgeous robe and contemptuous mockings were put upon him, not by them, but by Herod; and that *his* history of the crucifixion makes no mention of the crown of thorns, nor of the other wanton indignities attributed to the Roman soldiers by this writer.”‡

But I would ask Mr. Evanson, whether the punishment of crucifixion was consistent with *polished humanity*? It is, besides, very possible that *Pilate*, who evidently wished

* *Dissonance*, pp. 183, 184. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 224, 225.

† Mr. Evanson replies, that “*Matthew*, ch. xxvi.—from ver. 17 to the end of ver. 25, contains a narrative of the preparation of the paschal supper,” and that “in the three next verses is related the institution of the Lord's supper;” and that *Luke* does not represent our Lord to “partake of the wine himself.” *Letter*, pp. 60, 61.

‡ *Dissonance*, pp. 195, 196. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 237, 238.

to spare Jesus, might hope that his enemies would be sufficiently gratified by seeing him abused and insulted, without crucifixion. Nor is it necessary to suppose that any thing farther than *mockery* was intended. Mr. Evanson must know that the crown was probably made of the herb *acanthus*, and not of *thorns*, none of the ancients appearing so to have understood it.*

12. Mr. Evanson, besides thinking it improbable that Jesus should have appointed a meeting with his disciples in *Galilee*, (though, considering how many of his disciples were of that country, nothing could be more natural,) thinks it extraordinary that, "contrary," as he says, "to what they ever did at any other time, either before or after, they worshipped him; notwithstanding some of them were so incredulous, as not to believe even the testimony of their own senses."†

Now, that the disciples should feel themselves disposed to shew their Lord and Master more particular respect, by *bowing down before him*,‡ (for *that* Mr. Evanson knows to be the proper meaning of the word which we render *worship*,) after he was most unexpectedly risen from the dead, appears to me not at all extraordinary. Mr. Evanson himself could not behave with his former familiarity, even to an intimate friend in the same circumstances. He also had not, I suppose, observed that this *worshipping* of Jesus after his resurrection, is mentioned by *Luke* as well as *Matthew*, [xxviii. 17,] and in a manner more liable to exception: for it might be even after his ascension. *Luke* xxiv. 51, 52: "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, § and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

As to the *doubts* mentioned by the evangelist, it is by no

* See Vol. XIII. pp. 352, 353.

† *Dissonance*, p. 202. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 244, 245.

‡ Which Mr. Evanson chooses to render "making him a bow." He then refers to "Apoc. xxii. 8," where "the very same word" employed by *Matthew*, is "used to denote that more *particular respect* which the apostle *felt himself disposed to shew* the angel of the vision, but which that celestial minister earnestly prohibited as criminal when offered to any being but God." *Letter*, p. 61.

§ Mr. Evanson complains, that Dr. Priestley has omitted "in this place to take notice that the words *they worshipped him* are not to be found in six different copies of *Luke's Gospel*." *Letter*, p. 62.

From the phrase, "*après l'avoir adoré*," (*Luke* xxiv. 52,) *Le Clerc* describes the apostles as having just now received the astonishing doctrine that their Master was God, and Lord of Heaven and of Earth. He says, they adored him "*comme Dieu et Maître du Ciel et de la Terre*;" adding, "*Ce ne fut qu'alors, que les apôtres connurent toute la grandeur de leur Maître*." To whom would this learned critic have represented the apostles as rendering the incommunicable honours of Deity when they "were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God"?

means probable, though the expression rigorously construed might imply as much, that *Matthew* meant to say that the doubts of these disciples remained *after* they had seen him ; since he gives no intimation of any remaining doubts. Or if, like *Thomas*, they did not believe the evidence of their eyes, they might be convinced, as he was, by that of their other senses.*

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

Of the Things that Mr. Evanson objects to, as unworthy of our Saviour, in the Gospel of Matthew.

DEAR SIR,

I RESERVE for this Letter the consideration of another class of improbabilities that Mr. Evanson finds in the discourses of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of *Matthew*, they being, in his opinion, such as neither *Matthew*, nor any other person who really heard our Lord's discourses, could have related of him.

1. According to *Matthew*, (xii. 39,) Jesus declared to the Pharisees, who demanded of him a sign from heaven, that no sign should be given to that generation, "but the sign of the prophet Jonas;" for that, "as Jonas was three days and three nights" in the belly of a fish, so he should be "three days and three nights in the earth."

On this, Mr. Evanson remarks as follows: "The writer usually called St. Matthew, without the least reason or propriety, makes this similitude between Jonas and our Saviour to consist in the time that the former was in the whale's belly, and the latter in the grave; but if the fabulous interpolation of the two first chapters of the book of Jonah (to which Mendelsohn, the late learned Jew of Berlin,† assures us, no reasonable Jew ever pays the least regard) could be true, yet whosoever compares the geographical situation of Nineveh with respect to the Mediterranean Sea, will be convinced that nothing transacted upon that sea could fall under the notice of the inhabitants of Nineveh, nor, consequently, be any sign to them at all."‡ Again, he says, "At verse 40, the author, not understanding our Lord's

* See Vol. XIII. p. 381.

† "See the letter prefixed to his dialogue on the Immortality of the Soul." *Dissonance*, p. 74, Note.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 74, 75. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 101, 102.

meaning about the sign which Jonas was to the Ninevites, as recorded by St. Luke, not only shews that his credulity easily swallowed the fabulous legend of the prophet in the whale's belly; but in order to make out some kind of similitude between his situation there and our Saviour's, tells us, that as Jonas was confined in that extraordinary prison three nights and three days, so the Son of Man should be *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth. Even this pretended similitude, however, has not one corresponding feature in the two parts; for, in the first place, our Lord was in the grave only one day and two nights; and, in the next, Jonas, according to this incredible story, was alive the whole time, praying to and praising God, whereas Jesus was amongst the dead and buried, of whom the Psalmist says, 'The dead praise not thee, O Lord, neither they that go down into silence.'"* Mr. Evanson, therefore, greatly prefers the account of *Luke*, who contents himself with saying, that Jonas was a sign to that generation: the real signification of which, he says, was, that as Nineveh was to be destroyed forty days, or years, after the preaching of Jonah, so would the Jews after the same period, if they did not repent.†

This, however, is not the interpretation of *Luke*, who, for any thing Mr. Evanson knows, would have suggested the same idea that *Matthew* does, if, like him, he had given any explanation of the sign at all, but that of Mr. Evanson's. And though *Jonah* was alive, and Jesus dead, there was something very remarkable in their continuing in a state so nearly alike, the same space of time. Besides, the proper evidence of the divine mission of Jesus was his resurrection, and not the fulfilment of his prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem; and what the Pharisees demanded of him was a proof of his mission. That the phrase "three days and three nights," only means "the third day," I need not prove to any person acquainted with the Jewish phraseology.‡

2. To the advice of Jesus, not to give "that which is holy unto the dogs," and not to "cast pearls before swine," (*Matt.* vii. 6,) Mr. Evanson objects in the following extraordinary manner: "In chap. vii. 6, we find a vulgar proverb, antecedent to the mission of Jesus Christ, converted

* *Dissonance*, pp. 153, 154. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 191, 192.

† See *ibid.* pp. 75, 76. *Ed.* 2, pp. 102, 103.

‡ Mr. Evanson, however, contends, that the phrase *a night and a day* must "signify the whole nacthemeron of twenty-four hours," and refers to 2 *Cor.* xi. 25. *Letter*, p. 63.

into a precept of the gospel: 'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.' If these words have any meaning in this place, it must be to prohibit the teaching his holy religion, and propounding the valuable doctrines of the gospel to such profligate, profane, and brutal characters as, it was probable, would only treat their instructions with scorn and contempt, and reward their zeal with persecution and personal violence. Yet such a precept is directly contrary to the well-known constant practice of our Lord himself and all his apostles, and utterly repugnant to the most explicit, repeated lessons of duty urged upon his disciples on other occasions, the uniform tenor of which is, that in preaching the gospel they must expect and be prepared to endure odium, contempt, and ignominy, and the most cruel persecutions of every kind, even unto death."*

On the contrary, our Saviour's direction is such a dictate of prudence as he gave on other occasions, and such as is perfectly right and reasonable in itself. For why should a man expose himself to danger with no prospect of doing any good, but only of receiving harm? Did not Jesus advise his disciples not to expose themselves to persecution unnecessarily, but when they were persecuted in one city, to flee to another; and in general to be "wise as serpents, as well as harmless as doves"? And if Mr. Evanson question the authenticity of the books which contain these precepts, did not both himself and the apostles conduct themselves, on several occasions, according to these maxims?

3. In the beautiful parable of the sower, (*Matt.* xiii.) which Mr. Evanson says was in part copied from *Luke*, but with several variations for the worse,† (for which, however, it would be difficult to imagine a motive in a real copier,) Mr. Evanson is particularly offended at our Saviour's saying, (*ver.* 23,) "He that receiveth seed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty;" as if he intended to intimate, that moral improvement depended upon "the intellectual abilities of men;" and therefore he prefers the account of *Luke*, who ascribes the improvement to "an honest and good heart.—The intellectual abilities of men," he says, "indeed

* *Dissonance*, pp. 148, 149. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 183, 184.

† *Ibid.* p. 155. *Ed.* 2, p. 194.

vary as greatly as the degrees of their bodily strength, but in capacity for moral virtue they are all equal; the weakest and most illiterate may possess as honest and as good a heart as the wisest and most exalted genius that ever lived: the moral virtue of the latter may have a more extensive influence than that of the former, but that difference is merely accidental; his heart cannot be justly represented as a better and more fruitful soil in its proportion, though it might, with propriety, be compared to a more extensive field of equally productive soil, whose produce must, of consequence, be more extensively beneficial.”*

This appears to me to be mere cavilling, and, indeed, an unfair interpretation of *Matthew's* language, who evidently distinguishes between *understanding the word*, (which, however, Mr. Evanson will not deny to be necessary to any improvement of it,) and *bearing fruit*, by the particle *also*, as depending upon something else than the mere understanding it, and what that was, required no explanation. Besides, it is usual with the sacred writers to refer all mental excellence to the same seat, viz. the *heart*. *Prov.* xxiii. 15: “If thine heart be wise.” We are not to expect from them metaphysical exactness.

To the parable of the talents, Mr. Evanson objects as follows: “The pretended Matthew, on the contrary, makes him distribute his talents in the most partial, unequal manner; one only to one of his followers, twice as many to another, and five times as many to a third, as he himself expresses it, ‘to every man *according to his abilities* ;’ as if the religious instruction of that gospel so peculiarly preached to the poorest and most illiterate, was not equally intelligible to men of all capacities and degrees.”† But is it not a fact that, though the precepts of the gospel be equally intelligible to all persons, some are placed in situations in which they have a better opportunity of improving by it, and of diffusing the knowledge of it to others, besides many other advantages of a different kind, with which the rest of mankind are not favoured? All men have not the abilities, the knowledge, or the leisure, that Mr. Evanson has. But will he say that, in this various distribution of advantages, the Supreme Being is blameably partial?

4. A still more unworthy cavil is what Mr. Evanson objects to what Jesus said about the source of moral defilement: “In chapter xv. 11, we have the following curious

* *Dissonance*, p. 157. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 195, 196.

† *Ibid.* p. 130. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 221, 222.

piece of instruction addressed to the multitude: ‘Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man:’ and at ver. 15, this is called a parable. Surely this writer did not consider what constitutes a parable, when he called it by that name; for here is no similitude nor allegorical allusion whatsoever, but a plain didactic aphorism, so very perspicuous, that even the explanation of it, said to be given to the disciples at the request of St. Peter in the 17th and following verses, is not in any degree more intelligible, though much more absurd: for, with what propriety can *evil thoughts, murders, and thefts*, be said to *proceed out of the mouth*? Indeed, to say that any thing which proceeds out of the mouth, or even out of the heart, of man, defileth him, is as absurd as it were to say, that the turbid stream which flows from a polluted fountain, defileth the fountain.”*

By *parable*, the Jews meant any enigmatical saying. Thus *Balaam*, who only blessed Israel, and prophesied, is said, (*Numb.* xxiii. 7,) to have taken up “his parable.” *Solomon* (*Prov.* xxvi. 7, 9) speaks of “a parable in the mouth of fools.” *Job* also is said (xxvii. 1) to have used parables, when he introduced no comparison. If evil thoughts be expressed in words, they may, surely, be said to come “out of the mouth” of him that delivers them, and to imply impurity in the heart in which they are conceived, which is sufficient to justify the propriety of the language.

5. Mr. Evanson strongly objects to the parable of the king who took an account of his servants (*Matt.* xviii. 23—35); but chiefly because, “after an absolute, unconditional forgiveness once granted, to recant that pardon, and enforce the payment of his debt, by the severest penalties, because the man did not shew similar mercy to his own debtor, is downright tyranny and injustice.”† It is agreeable, however, to the maxims of the Divine government, as expressed in numerous passages of scripture, all the promises, as well as the threatenings of God, being, in fact, *conditional*, and revocable in case of misbehaviour; so that the lesson is highly important and useful.‡

6. That our Saviour frequently chose to speak in a figurative and enigmatical manner, perhaps to exercise the

* *Dissonance*, p. 164. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, p. 205.

† *Ibid.* p. 166. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, p. 205.

‡ See Vol. XIII. pp. 199—201.

understandings of his hearers, is evident. Such was his saying, that some men "made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake," (*Matt. xix. 12*,) evidently meaning, their choosing to lead a single life. Mr. Evanson, however, will have this to be understood literally, and on this, grounds the following curious conclusions: "In chap. xix. 12, the author, very inadvertently, puts into the mouth of our Saviour an expression which plainly betrays the age in which this spurious Gospel was written, and the particular sect of apostate Christians which he himself favoured; for in reply to a remark of the disciples upon a pretended condemnation of the divorces allowed by the Mosaic law, our Lord is made to say, that 'there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, which *have made themselves* eunuchs *for the kingdom of heaven's sake.*' Now, the prophetic marks of the predicted antichristian apostacy given us by St. Paul, 1 *Tim. iv. 2, 3*, are, first, that its authors would *speake lies in hypocrisy, having a seared conscience*; (a character, as far as I am able to judge, strongly and strikingly exemplified in this writer;) and, secondly, that they would *forbid marriage, and abstain from meats*: in conformity to the last distinguishing character of this early apostacy, this author, as I have before observed, in contradiction, not only to what St. Luke, but to what he himself elsewhere relates as our Saviour's doctrine, makes him give directions for fasting: and, on another occasion, to say that even the miraculous power of God, in curing some kind of demoniacs, could not be efficaciously exerted 'without prayer and *fasting*' on the part of the Almighty's agent: and here he clearly discovers to us the second of these prophetic marks, pre-noticed by St. Paul, by making our Saviour approve of a determined, unnatural abstinence from marriage, for *the kingdom of heaven's sake*. These were the peculiar doctrines of the Encratites or Continentes, a sect which appeared very early in the second century, and amongst whom it is not improbable, that the same madness of superstitious enthusiasm, which soon after led men into hermitages, monasteries, and even to stand for a great length of time in an erect posture on the top of a pillar, might have produced an instance or two of the unnatural self-violence the author speaks of, the very allusion to which convicts him of being a writer later than those instances: but it is absolutely impossible that, in our Saviour's time, almost as soon as the new covenant

of the kingdom of heaven or of God was begun to be preached, and even before his disciples comprehended its nature and intent, any men could have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of it."*

This, surely, requires no animadversion. Besides, if the Gospel of *Matthew* had not been written till the doctrine of the *Encratites* (the founder of which was *Tatian*, the disciple of *Justin Martyr*†) sprung up, it would have been absolutely impossible that it should have been received as the production of *Matthew*.

7. Mr. Evanson is displeased with the parable of the householder (*Matt.* xx.), who gave the same wages to those who had worked only one hour, and to those who had worked all the day. "If," says he, "by working in the vineyard is meant men's performing the moral duties of the gospel; and by their payment in the evening is to be understood the rewards of that future life which God has promised to all faithful and true Christians; there is not the least resemblance of any kind between the circumstances of the gospel covenant and those of the bargain made with the labourers in the parable: for, ever since the gospel has been preached to the world, wheresoever it is known, the labourers in the Christian vineyard are invited all together to enter into it; and the same covenanted terms are proposed to all, without any partial choice or predilection, viz. an eternal life of happiness in heaven. Now, in this parable, though the labourers who had wrought the entire day, having received the bare payment they had earned, had certainly no right to complain of injustice in the householder, nor to controul his generosity towards the others in giving them more than they had earned; yet surely they must feel the great difference between his mere justice to themselves and his extraordinary liberality to those who had wrought but one hour; and we cannot wonder that they murmured at so seemingly unreasonable a preference and partiality in the distribution of his bounty."‡

But Mr. Evanson should have considered that they who had worked but one hour had been waiting with a view to being hired all the day, so that they had shewn the best disposition to labour, and only wanted opportunity.

* *Dissonance*, pp. 167—169. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 206—208.

† Mr. Evanson objects, that "Eusebius says, (*Hist. Eccles.* l. iv. c. xxix.), that sect proceeded from Saturninus and Marcion, who both preceded Justin." *Letter*, p. 65. Yet Jerome calls *Tatian* "Encratitarum patriarches." *Lardner*, II. p. 140, *Note g.* See *ibid.* pp. 136, 137.

‡ *Dissonance*, pp. 169, 170. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 210, 211.

8. An inattention to the meaning of the word which we render *everlasting*, (for I cannot call it ignorance,) is the ground of another most unreasonable cavil of Mr. Evanson's, at the conclusion of our Lord's fine description of the proceedings of the last day. [*Matt.* xxv. 31—46.] "The latter part of this chapter," he says, "is a description of the day of judgment, and expressly teaches, not only that the righteous will then be rewarded with eternal life in heaven, but also, that the wicked will suffer *everlasting* punishment. There is such palpable injustice ascribed to the righteous Lord of heaven and earth by all those who represent him as inflicting infinite punishment for the definite, momentary offences of finite creatures, that such a doctrine would make me strongly suspect the authenticity of any scripture in which I found it; and it is with great satisfaction I can remark, that this doctrine is peculiar to this spurious evangelical history, and as repugnant to the positive declaration of the other scriptures of the New Testament, as it is to strict justice and the voice of reason: for they assure us, that, not an endless life of torment, but utter destruction and a second *death** await the unreformed wicked."†

Mr. Evanson cannot well be ignorant that the word *αιωνιος*, and the corresponding term in Hebrew, are frequently used to express an indefinite long period.‡ So he himself would understand it when it is predicated of the priesthood of *Aaron*, and the kingship in the family of *David*.

I have now discussed, and I hope with candour, every thing that Mr. Evanson has objected to the Gospel of *Matthew*;§ and if you have hitherto been at all impressed by his representations, I hope you will be satisfied that it has been without sufficient reason. I am, &c.

* "See 2 *Thess.* i. 9; *Apoc.* xx. 6." *Dissonance*, p. 181. *Ed.* 2, p. 222.

† *Ibid.* pp. 180, 181. (*P.*)

‡ See Vol. XIII. p. 302.

§ Which has been thus characterized by *Wakefield*: "—a piece of history, it must be acknowledged, the most singular in its *composition*, the most wonderful in its *contents*, and the most important in its *object*, that was ever exhibited to the notice of mankind. For simplicity of narrative, and an artless relation of facts, without any applause, or censure, or digressive remarks, on the part of the historian, upon the characters introduced in it; without any intermixture of his own opinion upon any subject whatsoever; and for a multiplicity of *internal* marks of *credibility*, this *Gospel* certainly has no parallel amongst human productions, if we except only the corresponding books of the *New Testament*."

"With respect to what is called the *style* of this *Gospel*, it is most evidently formed upon the *Hebrew idiom*. The words themselves are, for the most part, *classical* and well chosen: and the composition differs from the purest authors of *Greece*, only in the collocation of the words, and the inartificial and *idiomatic* construction of the periods: niceties, to which the *evangelical* writers paid no attention." *St. Matthew*, pp. 415, 416.

LETTER VIII.

Of Mr. Evanson's Objections to the Gospel of Mark.

DEAR SIR,

MR. EVANSON has not bestowed so much pains on the Gospel of *Mark* as he has done on that of *Matthew*, otherwise, I have no doubt but he would have found as much to object to in it; as if, by any accident, he had happened to prefer the Gospel of *Mark*, he would have found as much to object to that of *Luke*.

1. With respect to this Gospel, Mr. Evanson says, "The author himself no where pretends to be St. Mark; and nothing can be slighter or less satisfactory than the external testimony or historic evidence in its favour: as every candid inquirer will be convinced who attentively peruses the collection of those testimonies prefixed to the best editions of this Gospel, the chief of which, respecting a revelation to St. Peter of Mark's having written it, &c., are manifestly fabulous." * Now the testimony of *Mark* being the writer of this Gospel is as early and as strong as that of *Luke* being the author of *his*, the same writers always mentioning *the four Gospels* as of equal authority.

2. As if he had been present at the time, and in the secret, Mr. Evanson gives the following curious account of the composition of this Gospel: "It seems impossible to consider the unknown author of this Gospel in any other light than as the first person who attempted to harmonize the two contradictory Gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke*, and by extracting from each what he thought the most material passages, to compose of them one regular, consistent history of the public ministry of our Saviour. With this view, finding it absolutely impracticable to reconcile the two genealogies and accounts of the nativity and infancy of Jesus, like many later commentators, when they find themselves unable to elucidate the text, he has entirely omitted those parts of the two histories; and begins where the original writing of St. Luke certainly began, with the preaching and baptism of John. For the same reason, as it is impossible to make the conclusions of those two Gospels harmonize together, this compiler abruptly broke off his history at the eighth verse of the last chapter; and the twelve

* *Dissonance*, p. 212. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, p. 256.

following verses, which are compiled partly from Luke and Matthew, and still more from the Gospel attributed to St. John, not being found in the oldest and best copies of this work, are undoubtedly the addition of some still later hand, who has betrayed himself by inadvertently making his addition expressly contradict the author whom he personated.”*

To this it is only necessary to say, that such another harmonizer and abridger as Mr. Evanson makes *Mark* to be of the other Gospels, we shall not easily find; and that, on equally plausible ground, he might have made *Matthew* the harmonizer and abridger of *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*, and *Luke* the harmonizer and abridger of *John*, *Matthew* and *Mark*.

3. As Mr. Evanson censures *Matthew* for making the sign of the prophet *Jonah* to be different from that of *Luke*,† he censures *Mark* for contradicting them both. “In the eighth chapter, ver. 12, the author, unable to reconcile his mind to what the pretended Matthew has said of the sign of the prophet Jonas, though he was actually copying from him, has thought proper flatly to contradict both him and St. Luke, and to make our Saviour declare, that no sign at all should be given to that generation.”‡

What an unreasonable and obstinate man must this *Mark*, or whoever he was, have been, to have both the Gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke* before him to copy after, and yet, though he had no knowledge of his own, choose to follow neither of them! He must have known too, that his blunder would be exposed by the first person who would take the trouble to compare them. A very little candour, however, might have led Mr. Evanson to see that by *no sign at all*, this writer meant *no such sign* as the Pharisees required, viz. a sign from heaven.

4. A very great proportion of what Mr. Evanson objects to the Gospel of *Mark* relates to his representing Jesus as having seemed to use some natural means of cure, when he worked some of his miracles of a beneficent nature. “In the sixth chapter, verse 13, this writer tells us, without the least warrant from his originals, Luke and Matthew, that when our Lord sent out the twelve apostles with miraculous power to cure diseases, they anointed the sick they healed with oil. Now since the very intent of these miraculous cures was to convince the Jews who beheld them, in a way

* *Dissonance*, pp. 213, 214. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 257, 258.

† *Supra*, pp. 417, 418.

‡ *Dissonance*, p. 217. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 263.

peculiarly adapted to the kind, benevolent genius of the gospel, of the supernatural interposition of the Deity in favour of the new religion they announced ; every application, though of the most simple kind, must necessarily tend to counteract the belief of the miracle, and afford ground for suspicion, that the cure was effected by some medical virtue of the oil they used, not by the immediate power of God ; and, therefore, as no such application is ever said to have been used by our Saviour or any of his disciples in either of St. Luke's histories, it is in the highest degree improbable that any such unction was ever used by them ; and the very mention of such a circumstance in this Gospel and in the Epistle attributed to St. James, affords a very strong presumptive proof that neither of the writers lived in the apostolic age ; but that they both wrote in the second century, when the preachers of Christianity no longer having the miraculous gift of healing, yet pretending to possess it, conscious that no effect would be produced upon the patient by their word or touch, introduced the formal ceremony of anointing with oil, accompanied by the united prayer of the Presbytery ; and if, as, no doubt, sometimes happened, the sick person recovered, the cure was attributed to the miraculous efficacy of the pious, greasy ritual, which, that it might not be deemed, in any case, absolutely ineffectual, whenever the patient died, was transferred to the next world, to secure his eternal salvation there ; for which purpose alone, under the title of *extreme unction*, it is still used by the most perfectly and most consistently orthodox church in Christendom.

“ The seventh chapter, verse 33, contains an account of our Lord's curing a deaf and dumb person, with such ridiculous gesticulations as are very unworthy the character of the messenger of almighty God, putting his fingers into his ears, and touching his tongue with his spittle.” He adds, “ At the twenty-third verse, this writer again represents our Saviour, with the airs of a mountebank,* applying his spittle to the eyes of a blind man in order to give him sight ; and as if one interposition of *almighty* power were not sufficient to accomplish a perfect cure, the man's sight is not completely acquired till he has applied his hands a second time to the eyes.” †

If Mr. Evanson can suppose the Gospel of *Mark* and the Epistle of *James* to have been written in an age in which he can prove that Christians had adopted the super-

* Altered to “ in a very unbecoming manner,” in *ed. 2.*

† *Dissonance*, pp. 215—218. (*P.*) *Ed. 2*, pp. 261—263.

stitious practice of anointing with oil, when, being conscious that no effect would be produced by it in this life, they thought it might secure eternal salvation in the next, it will be much later than he seems to imagine, long after the certain existence of both these books. But if he had attended to the accounts of other miracles recorded in the Scriptures, the authenticity of which, I presume, he will not deny, he would have found nothing particular to object to in those of *Mark*.

Did not *Moses* strike the rock * before the water gushed out, though this action might have suggested the idea of the water having previously filled some channel or reservoir, naturally contained in the mountain, and that nothing was wanting but to remove a slight obstruction to its running out? † Did he not throw a branch of a tree into the fountain of bitter waters at *Mara*, in order to make them fit for drinking? ‡ Did not *Elisha* order *Naaman* to wash seven times in the river Jordan in order to be cured of his leprosy? And did not *Elijah* stretch himself upon the dead child, as if he might bring him to life by communicating warmth to it?

But suppose our Saviour really meant to give the blind man an idea that he did not cure him by a miracle, but by some medicinal effect of the ointment, what serious objection could be made to his conduct? All that could be said would be, that, in this case, he chose to exert his benevolence without wishing to have it known at the time that the miracle had any other use, his other public miracles being abundantly sufficient to establish his divine mission.

5. Mr. Evanson has two other objections to this Gospel of Mark on the subject of prophecy: "The only prophecies that I have observed peculiar to this Gospel attributed to St. Mark, are, first, chap. x. 30, where he makes our Lord predict, that whosoever hath forsaken houses, lands, or friends, for his sake and the gospel's, *shall receive not only eternal life in the world to come, but now in this time the very same articles multiplied an hundred fold, with persecution*. As persecution can be exerted only upon a person's property, liberty, or life, it seems inconceivable how possessions of any kind should be so greatly multiplied in a state of perse-

* *Exod.* xvii. 6. See Vol. XI. p. 155.

† Mr. Evanson objects, that "the striking the rock—is recorded as being immediately condemned by the Deity himself." *Letter*, p. 69. See, on *Numb.* xx. 12, Vol. XI. p. 249.

‡ Mr. Evanson says, this "was no miracle, but a restoration of the waters of *Mara* to salubrity and an agreeable taste, by means of the naturally medical property of a particular wood." *Letter*, p. 69. See, on *Exod.* xvi. 25, Vol. XI. p. 151.

cution; and the very terms of the prediction appear to imply in them a manifest contradiction: but howsoever they may be interpreted, the whole history of religious persecution, from the illustrious messenger of the new covenant to the present hour, proves the prophecy to be absolutely false, and the writer of it altogether unworthy of credit.

“The second is the prediction respecting St. Peter’s denying his Master, chap. xiv. 30, where, in direct contradiction to both the writings he had before him, he makes our Lord tell him, that before the cock should crow *twice*, he would thrice deny him. Accordingly, vers. 68—72, he says, *the cock crew* as soon as Peter had once denied him, and after he had repeated his denial twice more, with oaths and curses very unbecoming a chosen disciple of Jesus Christ, the cock crew a second time. This relation is so absolutely irreconcilable with what is given us in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and *that* with the circumstances of the same event recorded by St. Luke, that two out of the three must inevitably be false: and which those are, the judicious reader will decide as he thinks fit.”*

A person used to the figurative language of scripture, and especially that of our Saviour, might have spared himself the former of these remarks, by supposing that, the literal sense being impossible, some other must have been intended; and it is not very unnatural to suppose that, instead of the actual possession of houses and lands, the Christian deprived of them by persecution would have more than an equivalent satisfaction of another kind; or he might have supposed a very few words to have been inserted by an error of the transcriber. I wonder that the sagacity of Mr. Evanson did not find another and much stronger objection to this passage, viz. that a man who had lost one *mother* by persecution, should be rewarded with two or more, and one ancient version has *fathers* as well as mothers. On this topic, Mr. Evanson might have displayed as much ingenious sarcasm as on any other, on which he has with so much seeming satisfaction enlarged the most. I wonder that he omitted the opportunity. The slight difference about the *cock crowing* needs no answer; at least it cannot be said, that the account which supposes *two* cock-crowings was an *abridgement* of that which made only *one*.

Upon the whole, there is so little that Mr. Evanson objects to the Gospel of *Mark*, that, the external evidence

* *Dissonance*, pp. 218, 219. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 264—266.

being the same for both, I do not see why he might not have made this his only genuine Gospel, and have thrown that of *Luke* into the class of apocryphal ones. The passages he objects to in *Luke* he supposes to be interpolations, and those in *Mark* to be the composition of the writer. But this is perfectly arbitrary. He might just as well have ridiculed *Luke* for the absurdities he finds in his Gospel, and have supposed the few things he objects to in *Mark* to have been interpolations. That the Gospel of *Luke* is written in a better style and manner, is with me far from being any evidence of its not being a later fabrication, by a person more used to composition.

I am, &c.

LETTER IX.

Of Mr. Evanson's Objections to the Gospel of John.

DEAR SIR,

MR. EVANSON finds much more to object to the Gospel of *John* than to that of *Mark*, nor do I wonder at it. There are many striking peculiarities in his Gospel; but all that can be justly inferred from this circumstance is, that he is an original writer, and did not copy from any other, though antiquity says, that he had seen the works of the other evangelists. On this account he has not many things in common with them, and when he does go over the same part of the history, he appears to me to have done it for the sake of greater exactness: for in all those cases he is remarkably circumstantial; as in his account of the feeding of the "five thousand,"* and of *Peter* denying his master.† These parts, as well as every other in his Gospel, bear more internal, unequivocal marks of being written by an eye-witness, than any other writings whatever, sacred or profane. His view seems to have been, without directly saying that the other Gospels were not sufficiently exact, to relate the story in a more correct manner. But this is no impeachment of the veracity, or general good information, of the other evangelists.

It is evident also that the Gospel of *John* was not composed as one continued or complete work; and it is probable that it was written at different times, and through the inattention of the writer, or his friends, who might assist in putting the parts of it together, they are not always properly

* *John* vi. 5—13. See Vol. XIII. pp. 152, 153.

† *John* xviii. 15—18, 25—27. See Vol. XIII. p. 342.

arranged; the *fifth* chapter, as Mr. Mann has shewn,* being evidently out of its proper place. The *last* chapter may be considered as a kind of supplement, added after the rest of the work had been formally concluded in the preceding chapter. Critics have also discovered some interpolations in this Gospel, but they are pretty easily distinguished. These things, however, by no means affect the authenticity of the work in general, which was received by all the primitive Christians as unquestionably the writing of the apostle.

1. Mr. Evanson objects to the style of this Gospel as remarkably different from that of the *Revelation*.† It is not, however, more different from it than the style of some of the epistles of *Paul* is from that of others;‡ and the same persons, in different circumstances, and on different subjects, write in a very different manner. Besides, the apostles not being native Greeks, might be assisted in the composition of their writings, and by different persons at different times.§

As there is an uniform tradition in favour of the apostle *John* being the author of the Gospel, and of the first of the epistles that bear his name (and the style of them is remarkably similar), the different style of the *Revelation* has been alleged as an argument to prove that this book was not written by him, but by another *John*.|| Mr. Evanson, indeed, says, that “the apostle John” is “the avowed author of the prophetic book of the Apocalypse.”¶ But this is so far from being the case, that because the author of this book does not call himself an apostle, but only *John*, it has by many been ascribed to the other *John*.** That Mr. Evanson should be guilty of this great oversight, considering the

* See *supra*, p. 51; *Appendix*, No. III.

† *Dissonance*, p. 220. *Ed.* 2, p. 267.

‡ This Mr. Evanson warmly contests as to “those Epistles of Paul which” he allows “to be genuine.” *Letter*, p. 71.

§ Mr. Evanson rejects “the supposition,” especially in the case “of Paul, who spoke the Greek language with the utmost fluency; and who preached the gospel to the Athenians, and to every principal city of Greece, in their native language.” *Ibid.*

|| “A Presbyter.” See *Lardner*, VI. pp. 627, 629.

“The grand revelations of the gospel,” says Mr. Evanson, “after our Lord’s ascension, were made first to John in the visions of the Apocalypse, and secondly, to Paul, as he has informed us in his Epistles; and since the latter was the apostle to the Gentiles, nothing can be more improbable than that our Saviour should have passed by all his other chosen apostles, and manifested his predilection of some other John that nobody ever heard of, by sending angels to shew him the prophetic visions of that book, which is emphatically denominated the Revelation of Jesus Christ.” *Letter*, p. 72.

¶ *Dissonance*, p. 219. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 267.

** This Mr. Evanson calls “an insinuation that the Apocalypse was not written by John the Apostle.” To him, however, Dr. Priestley ascribes it, Vol. XIV. p. 442.

attention he has given to this book,* is not a little extraordinary.

2. The author of this Gospel, says Mr. Evanson, "it must be evident to every competent, unprejudiced judge, who reads it in the original, particularly the exordium, was well acquainted with the writings of Plato."† He also says, "The supposed John begins with representing him" (*Jesus*) "as the divine logos of Plato, under a human form, dwelling among men," (which by the way is very remote from any thing in *Platonism*,) "and repeatedly represents him as omniscient."‡ He therefore says, "I am perfectly convinced that this Gospel was not written earlier than the beginning§ of the second century, and that it is the patchwork composition of some convert from the Pagan schools."||

Now this supposed deep knowledge of *Platonism* rests on the slightest foundation; for the term *logos* by no means necessarily means the logos of *Plato*, but is most probably that of the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, meaning that *logos*, or word of *God*, by which, according to Moses and the Psalmist, *all things were made*, and with which no Jew could be unacquainted. And if it was the same *logos* that was in Christ, and acted by him, it might be said to *dwell* in him; and being the power of God himself, could not but be both omnipotent and omniscient, though the latter attribute is not particularly mentioned by this writer. It is possible, however, that the apostle *John* might have heard of the *logos* of *Plato*, as well as of that of the *Gnostics*, and might intend, in opposition to them, to speak of the true logos, viz. that of the Scriptures. But this is not incompatible with the age or the circumstances of the apostle *John*.

3. Mr. Evanson finds the greatest contradiction between the Gospel of *John* and that of *Luke*, and even those of *Matthew* and *Mark*, in his representing Jesus as making disciples before *John* was cast into prison, and the disciples baptizing for him at that time. "Such gross contradiction," he says, "ought to convince the most orthodox, that there must be falsehood on one side or the other, if not on

* In his Letter to Bishop Hurd, 1777, and his "Reflections upon the State of Religion in Christendom; particularly in the Countries situated within the Limits of the Western Roman Empire, at the Commencement of the Nineteenth Century of the Christian Æra," 1802.

† *Dissonance*, p. 220. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 268.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 234. (P.) "See *Ch.* i. 48, ii. 25, iv. 18, xxi. 17." *Ed.* 2, p. 283.

§ Altered to "the middle," in *ed.* 2.

|| *Dissonance*, p. 205. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 248. It is on *Matthew* that Mr. Evanson here makes this remark.

both; and that, therefore, common sense and reason require them, at least, to reject as false and spurious, either this Gospel attributed to St. John, or both the Gospels attributed to the other two.* But all that can fairly be inferred from this difference is, as has been observed by the earliest writers, either that *John* was better acquainted with the circumstances of the early history of Jesus than the other evangelists, or, that they having omitted the mention of them; he thought proper to relate them.

4. Mr. Evanson lays great stress on the difference between *Matthew* and *John* with respect to *John the Baptist* knowing Jesus, or not knowing him, previous to his baptizing him. "Let us bring the whole," he says, "to the proposed test; observing, by the way, a gross contradiction between this writer and the pretended *Matthew*, at the very outset; for, chap. i. 32, he tells us, that *John the Baptist* declared he did not know Jesus to be the destined Messiah till he saw the Holy Spirit descending on him; whereas the Gospel of St. *Matthew*, iii. 14, informs us, that he knew him as soon as he came to him; and, at first, refused to baptize him, 'Saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?' Yet still the orthodox receive both these Gospels for the genuine works of apostles, and believe both these contradictory assertions to be truth, and even the inspired word of God!!"†

What the orthodox believe about *inspiration* is no concern of mine, or of Mr. Evanson's. He might just as well have taken this opportunity of exclaiming against the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. All that I have to observe is, that two original writers might differ as much as these without giving any just grounds for arraigning the authenticity of the works of either of them. I prefer the account of *John*, who I believe had seen that of *Matthew*, and, as having been a disciple of the *Baptist*, he had a better opportunity of being acquainted with the real circumstances of the transaction.

5. There is another difference between the Gospel of *John* and that of *Luke*, on which Mr. Evanson likewise lays great stress.‡ It relates to the call of *Peter* and some other disciples, to follow Jesus. In my opinion the two different accounts § may, without much difficulty, be reconciled. Nothing, however, would follow from the difference being irreconcilable, but that one of them (and the probability

* *Dissonance*, p. 227. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 274, 275.

† *Ibid.* pp. 221, 222. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 269, 270.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 223; *Ed.* 2, p. 270.

§ *Luke* v. 3—11; *John* i. 35.

will be in favour of *John*) was better informed concerning the early part of the history of Jesus than the other; and the narrative of *John* is remarkably circumstantial in this case.

But it is by no means certain that all the twelve apostles always accompanied Jesus before their appointment to that office. As it is then only said, that *they might be with him*, it is probable that before this time they had not always been with him. *Peter* therefore might have become a disciple of Jesus in Judea, as *John* says he did, but, returning to his occupation, might have a second and more particular call at the Sea of Galilee afterwards.

6. Mr. Evanson, making the greatest account of prophecy, is much offended at the Gospel of *John*, as not containing any, though he did not think the better of those of *Matthew* or *Mark* for having as much of this internal evidence as that of *Luke*. "As to what," he says, "is the grand internal testimony of authenticity, indispensably necessary in every scripture which contains the history of a supernatural revelation, predictions of future events verified by their actual completion, after all that we have already seen of this writer, to find such evidence in his work, peculiar to himself, would be as unaccountable and wonderful as any of the extraordinary miracles with which he has endeavoured to astonish the ignorant credulity of the second century; but though, with a degree of circumstantial minuteness which no writer of credit would have pretended to, he has reported with verbal exactness the discourses not of Jesus only, but of *John the Baptist* also, to his particular disciples, at the distance of, at least, thirty-six years after they were uttered, and some of them of very considerable length; he has not thought fit to introduce any thing which can with propriety be deemed a prophecy."*

But is it necessary that every true history, or every canonical book of scripture, should contain a prophecy? What prophecy of consequence is there in the *Acts of the Apostles*? *John*, having seen the other Gospels, had no occasion to repeat the prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. Mr. Evanson, instead of being impressed with the circumstantial minuteness of the narrative of *John* respecting the *Baptist*, (which, if it had occurred in *Luke*, would have been decisive with him in favour of his having been present at the transactions,) notices it here as a certain mark of imposture;

no person in his opinion being able to retain so many particulars in memory. But surely the circumstances of a thing of such great importance as the preaching of the *Baptist*, whose disciple this apostle had been, and which it is probable he had, in the course of his preaching, related a thousand times, would never be lost from his recollection.

7. Mr. Evanson, however, acknowledges one prophecy in the Gospel of *John*, but he cavils at it on account of the enigmatical manner in which it is expressed, though all the prophecies in his favourite book of *Revelation* are delivered in as figurative and enigmatical a manner. Because Jesus said, "Destroy this temple," meaning his body, "and in three days I will raise it up,"* Mr. Evanson says, "It makes our Lord assure them, that though dead, he would raise himself up, whereas all the other apostles, and even John himself, (for he was in company with, and therefore agreed with Peter, Acts iii. 5,) unanimously asserted, that it was not himself, but *God* who raised him from the dead."†

But though, the better to conceal his meaning, Jesus said, that if the temple was destroyed *he* would raise it again, he evidently only meant that it *would be* raised again, and by that power by which all his miraculous works (which to appearance proceeded from himself) were really performed. He was in no danger of being understood to say that a dead man could do any thing, and much less raise himself to life. Whoever the author of this Gospel was, it is plain that he fully understood this to be the meaning of the expression.

8. Mr. Evanson equally cavils at what Jesus is represented by *John* as saying concerning the privileges of those who should believe and obey his Gospel, in not being subject to death. "In chap. viii. 51, our Lord is represented as saying, 'Verily, verily, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death;' or, as it is repeated in the next verse, 'shall never taste of death;' and again, xi. 25, 26, he not only says, 'He who believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,' but also, 'Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.' What meaning could the writer have in such absurd and groundless predictions as these? St. Paul, as well as daily experience, assures us, that *in Adam*, in our human nature, *all men die*, and we know that our Lord himself, his apostles, and all his most faithful disciples, died, or, in the words of the author, *have seen or tasted of death*;

* *John* ii. 19. See Vol. XIII. p. 279.

† *Dissonance*, pp. 250, 251. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 300, 301.

and if we should suppose, that he only intended to insinuate that, on account of the certainty of the resurrection of his disciples, their natural death was not to be accounted dying; yet still, according to this author himself, the quibble would hold as truly of the most profligate unbeliever as of those who believed on him; for, chap. v. 28, 29, he says, ‘The hour is coming in which all that are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.’”*

When what a person says cannot be literally true, it is candid (as no man writes without some meaning) to suppose that he speaks figuratively. And Mr. Evanson certainly knew that by *never dying* some interpreters suppose our Lord meant *not dying for ever*, and others, that in this expression he referred to the case of those who will be found alive at his second coming, of whom Paul says, that they shall *not die*, but *be changed*. Had the expression occurred in *Luke*, Mr. Evanson would have found no difficulty at all in it; or if he had, he would have supposed it to be an interpolation, and not to affect the authenticity of the work in general.

9. In another passage also, Mr. Evanson cavils at the manner in which, according to this evangelist, our Saviour chose to express himself, when his real meaning, interpreted by the analogy of scripture language, was sufficiently clear. When, after our Lord’s resurrection, he is represented as *breathing on his apostles*, as an emblem of their receiving the Holy Spirit, or *breath*, he, “at the same time, (O, impious falsehood!) gave them power to remit or retain any person’s sins.”† On this subject he expatiates more at large: “The very nature of the gospel covenant, as well as the whole history of Peter and the other apostles, shew us, that neither he nor any of them had the power of forgiving or retaining sins; and that neither the whole college of apostles, nor even Jesus Christ himself, ever have been or will be able (if it were possible to suppose them willing) to admit one vicious, unreformed person into, nor to exclude one virtuous, benevolent man out of *the kingdom of heaven*. Indeed the whole conversation, of which this prophecy [*Matt. xvi. 18, 19*] makes a part, is so exceedingly different from that which St. Luke tells us our Saviour held on the

* *Dissonance*, pp. 252, 253. *Ed. 2*, pp. 302, 303.

† *Ibid.* p. 239. (P.) *Ed. 2*, p. 288.

same occasion, that it cannot be entitled to any degree of credit, except with those who think fit rather to reject the Gospel of St. Luke."*

Now what is there to shock Mr. Evanson so much in this? Did not Jesus pronounce the sins of the paralytic person, whom he healed at *Capernaum*, to be forgiven, even according to his favourite evangelist *Luke*? (v. 20.) And whatever be meant by the expression, Mr. Evanson will not deny but that it was as impious in Jesus as in the apostles, since he considers him as equally a human being, having no powers but what he received from God. Also, whatever power Jesus had, he transferred it to the apostles. With Mr. Evanson, therefore, I have no occasion to enter any farther into the explanation of our Lord's meaning in this language, whether it signified the cure of diseases, or distinguishing the characters of men.

10. With as little reason Mr. Evanson is offended at the language of our Saviour to the woman of Samaria. "In chap. iv. 21, the author makes our Saviour say to the Samaritan woman, 'Believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.' Had the words been, that, under the new covenant, God should no longer be worshipped there with sacrifices and oblations, they would have been true, and of the same import with many other passages both of the Old and New Testament; but in the indefinite sense in which they are here used, nothing can be falser; for Christianity teaches men to worship God both at Jerusalem and Samaria, and in every place upon the globe."†

Could Mr. Evanson really think that the writer of this book, whoever he was, meant to represent our Saviour as saying the time would come when God would not be worshipped at all, neither at *Jerusalem*, nor yet on Mount *Gerizim*? No writer could entertain so absurd an idea. Mr. Evanson, therefore, must have known that the words had some other meaning. And what is more natural than to suppose, that, since the question between Jesus and the woman was about the one place in which God would be worshipped, in preference to all others, under the old dispensation, such as Jerusalem had been, that in the gospel dispensation there would be *no such place* for all true worshippers, neither at Jerusalem nor in Samaria. That God

* *Dissonance*, p. 209. (P.) *Ed.* 2. 252.

† *Ibid.* p. 251. (P.) *Ed.* 2. p. 301.

will never be worshipped with sacrifices and oblations under the new covenant, which Mr. Evanson here says "would have been true," was evidently not true; for in that manner did both Jesus himself and the apostles after him worship,* and so, I doubt not, will the Jews once more, when converted to Christianity, after their return to their own country, and the rebuilding of the temple.†

11. Mr. Evanson thinks it extraordinary that *Nathanael* should be mentioned as "the sixth disciple, who, though declared by our Lord to be without guile, was not one of his apostles, nor is even once mentioned in any other history."‡ But Mr. Evanson should have observed, that the ancients, as well as moderns, suppose that *Nathanael* was the same with *Bartholomew*, one of the twelve apostles.§ Had *John* given a list of the apostles, the name of *Nathanael* might have appeared among them. Mr. Evanson might have made the same objection to the Gospel of *Luke*, who speaks of the call of *Levi*, and the feast that he made for Jesus, (v. 27,) without ever making any farther mention of him; for in his enumeration of the names of the twelve apostles (vi. 15), we find that of *Matthew*, but no *Levi*.||

Mr. Evanson is no less offended at *Lazarus*, the intimate friend of Jesus, not constantly following him. "Our Lord repeatedly declared that no man was worthy of him, or could be his disciple, who did not forsake family, friends, and all he had, for his sake and the gospel's; yet, according to this history, *Lazarus*, his dearly beloved friend, never forsook his family and abode at *Bethany* to accompany him, like his apostles; nor is he said, even by this only writer who mentions him, to have ever taken an active part in the promulgation of that new covenant to mankind, to establish which was the sole object of our Lord's life, death, and resurrection from the dead; and which, during his whole public ministry, seemed alone to occupy his thoughts and attention."¶ But surely Mr. Evanson must know, that few besides the twelve apostles constantly accompanied Jesus. He could, therefore, only mean that no man could be worthy of being his

* Mr. Evanson replies, "that the promulgation of the new covenant did not commence till the day of Pentecost, after our Lord's ascension; and that the religion of that new covenant cannot, in any sense, be said to have been properly established in the world till after the old covenant had been providentially abolished by the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem." *Letter*, p. 79.

† See *supra*, pp. 392.

‡ *Dissonance*, p. 224. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 271.

§ See Vol. XIII. p. 42.

|| See *supra*, p. 390, Note †.

¶ *Dissonance*, p. 246. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 296.

disciple who was not *ready* to leave all and follow him, if it should be required of him so to do.*

12. Disposed as Mr. Evanson was to cavil at every thing in the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, not contained in that of *Luke*, we cannot wonder at his censure of the miracle of changing water into wine. But that he should exaggerate as he does every circumstance that has the appearance of improbability, and treat with so much levity and contempt what others regard with reverence, is something more than I should have expected of him, or of any Christian. I shall, however, quote all that he says about it. "The first miracle he has related, and which he calls the beginning of the miracles of Jesus, is the changing the water into wine at a marriage-feast, when the inviter's stock of wine grew low; though the story itself informs us that the guests had already drank so *well*, that the master of the feast judged it more probable, that if any more wine had been brought them, it would have been of an inferior quality to what they had been drinking; but this miraculous wine was of so superior and excellent a flavour, that it must necessarily re-excite even the sated appetite, and tempt them to continue their intemperance with a fresh relish. That this writer, and many another orthodox preacher of what is called Christianity, had he been endowed with sufficient power, would have performed and gladly partaken of the intemperate joys of so wonderfully seasonable a transmutation, I can easily suppose, and think it not improbable that he would also have exerted his supernatural ability to the enriching himself and his poor disciples, by transmuting the cheap and baser metals into gold, and to the enjoyment of many other instances of sensual indulgence equally laudable and equally Christian as the intemperate use of strong liquor: but whosoever rightly apprehends the character and doctrine of the holy Mediator of the new covenant; and has observed how utterly incompatible every degree of sensual excess is with the gospel precepts of sobriety, temperance, moderation, and the subjection of our bodily appetites to reason and religious duty, will find such a miracle as this incredible, though it had been recorded in all the four his-

* Mr. Evanson persists in maintaining that Lazarus "never followed *Jesus*, nor gave up any worldly comfort or convenience, nor took the least pains to forward the important object of his mission; but continued to live inactive until his death, with his family at Bethany, and then, according to this history, was most miraculously restored to life again, only that he might remain as useless for the purpose of preaching the gospel of the new covenant, as he had been before." *Letter*, pp. 79, 80.

tories ; and coming in so very exceptionable a form, upon the single, unsupported testimony of so very exceptionable an historian, it is altogether as unworthy of belief as the fabulous Roman Catholic legend of St. Nicholas's chickens, of later times. To St. Luke's credit, he is so far from giving it the least confirmation, that, though he informs us our Lord, from motives of compassion for a large multitude who had followed him to such a distance from their own homes, and stayed to hear him so late that they could not otherwise have been provided with necessary sustenance, miraculously fed five thousand persons with only five loaves and two fishes ; yet he does not tell us of his changing so much as one firkin of water into wine on that charitable occasion, though, here, he is said to transmute eighteen firkins for the use of these jovial toppers of Cana."*

Had this story been found in *Luke*, and Mr. Evanson should not have thought it an interpolation, all that he would have inferred from it would have been, that our Saviour was no enemy to innocent exhilaration on a natural occasion of joy ; and that there was a propriety in his supplying a want, of which himself and his attendants, probably more than had been expected, had been the occasion, in a family that perhaps could but ill afford it. So differently may the same thing be represented, according to the state of mind with which it is considered.

13. Mr. Evanson finds much improbability in John's account of our Saviour's intercourse with the woman of Samaria, whom he calls " a libidinous woman ;" as, at her saying " the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans," though his disciples were then gone to buy food in a city of the Samaritans ; that to her, and, as he says, in a " strain of fictitious jargon," he announced himself to be the Messiah, though not to the Jews ; that he should say, " that it was then four months to the time of harvest, which, he says, is inconsistent with the history ; and that it could not with truth be said, that *other men laboured and the apostles entered into their labours* ; and he concludes with saying, " Surely a writer so little consistent with the best confirmed truth, and with common sense, is very unjustly accounted an apostle of Jesus Christ."†

That there are considerable difficulties attending the cir-

* *Dissonance*, pp. 240, 241. (P.) *Ed.* 2. pp. 289—291, where, instead of " for the use of these jovial toppers of Cana," Mr. Evanson has " to prolong the festivity of those who, by their own confession, had already drank very abundantly."

† *Ibid.* pp. 228—231. (P.) *Ed.* 2. pp. 276—279.

cumstances of this story, I readily acknowledge, and therefore I am sometimes inclined to think that, like some other parts of this Gospel, it has been misplaced. But the improbabilities are by no means so great as Mr. Evanson represents them. The greatest difficulty respects Jesus owning himself to be the *Messiah*, though it appears to have been to this woman only. For, what is not a little extraordinary, the people of the town do not appear to have learned it of her, but to have inferred it, as our Lord's hearers in general did, from his discourses and his works.

The *dealings* the woman refers to need not be supposed to be of a mercantile nature, but only acts of friendship ;* and the "four months to the harvest" expresses not the distance from that time to the next harvest, but the usual interval between the seed-time and harvest. And there was a great propriety in this application of such a proverbial expression, since the natural harvest followed the seed-time at the distance of "four months ;"† whereas his spiritual harvest came immediately after the seed-time.

As to the character of this woman, which, to heighten the improbability of the story, Mr. Evanson makes the worst of, Bishop Pearce supposes it not to have been what our common copies and translations intimate, viz. that of a woman living an openly licentious life, but that, though she had had four husbands, she had not at that time any husband ; and the respect which her townsmen seem to have had for her certainly favours this supposition.‡

14. By an easy conjecture of Bishop Pearce, the justness of which I think I have in a manner demonstrated, viz. that the word *passover* in *John* vi. 4, is an interpolation, all the following censure may be obviated. "In the fifth chapter, the author tells us, that after the cure of the nobleman's son at Capernaum, which, he says, was the second of our Saviour's miracles in Galilee, he went again to Jerusalem to a feast of the Jews ; but does not say what feast. According to his own description of the time of our Lord's return to Galilee, that it was four months before harvest, it ought to be another feast of the passover, unless we suppose him to have transgressed the injunction of the Mosaic law. If this writer, therefore, were a Jew, or well versed in the customs and ordinances of the Jews, he must mean that this was a

* See, on *John* iv. 9, Vol. XIII. p. 57.

† See, on *John* iv. 35, *ibid.* p. 60. Mr. Evanson, on the authority of *Calmet* and *Volney*, contends, "that the distance between the two seasons is not *four* but *six* months." *Letter*, p. 81.

‡ See, on *John* iv. 18, Vol. XIII. p. 57.

second passover, at which our Saviour attended, after the commencement of his public ministry ; yet after his return again into Galilee from this feast, in the very next chapter we are told that he crossed the Sea of Galilee, and that ‘ the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.’ Surely this writer is the most extraordinary chronologist and historiographer that ever appeared in the world !”*

That the word *passover* was not to be found in this place in the time of *Irenæus*, is certain. For he expressly enumerates all the passovers that he could find distinctly mentioned, or alluded to, in the Gospels, with a view to make them as many as he could ; and to help his argument, he supposes some feasts to have been passovers which certainly were not so, and yet he makes no mention of this.†

15. Without seeming to know that some of the verses in *John’s* account of the cure of the impotent man at the pool of *Bethesda*‡ are an interpolation, which he might have seen in *Griesbach*,§ Mr. Evanson makes the following remarks, worthy only of an *unbeliever* : “ In the fifth chapter our author relates the miraculous cure of a poor, friendless, impotent man. So far all is credible. But unfortunately he tells us, this man had been long waiting to obtain his cure from the miraculous efficacy of the pool of Bethesda, whose waters being disturbed at certain seasons, by an angel, who descended for that purpose, acquired for a moment the wonderful virtue of healing every kind of sickness or disease ; but lost it again so instantaneously, that none but the single patient who got first into the pool after the troubling of the water could receive the least benefit from it. In contradiction, therefore, to the whole tenor of the Jewish history, from whence we learn, that there was no prophet nor any supernatural interposition of Divine Providence amongst the Jews, from the time of their last return from Babylon to the coming of Jesus Christ, this writer informs us of a standing miracle amongst them, notoriously and frequently repeated in the sheep-market, that is, in one of the most public places in Jerusalem. Had this been true, it could never have escaped the notice of either Jew or Roman, resident in that metropolis ; but must have been often spoken of by every historian, who gave an account of that

* *Dissonance*, pp. 231, 232. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 279, 280.

† See *supra*, pp. 51, 132; *Appendix* No. III; Vol. XIII. p. 152. Here Mr. Evanson makes no reply, but that “ the answer is quite hypothetical.” *Letter*, p. 81.

‡ See, on *John* v. 4, Vol. XIII. p. 164.

§ See *Improved Version*, 1817, p. 222, *Notc.*

city: yet no such circumstance is so much as once hinted at by Luke, Josephus, nor any of the Roman historians.”*

But supposing the part of the story which relates to the virtues of the pool not to have been an interpolation, but that the writer had taken it for granted that the virtues ascribed to it were real, how does this affect his character? He might have been *credulous*, in this respect, and yet his history not the less authentic.†

16. Mr. Evanson finds a number of contradictions of his only Gospel of *Luke* in the circumstances attending our Lord's last passover, and those of his trial, which he enlarges upon in his usual sarcastic way. “The last-named writer we have seen, informs us, that the last supper our Saviour ate with his apostles was the paschal supper, which he told them he had been particularly desirous to eat with them; that at that supper, after instituting the communion of bread and wine, as a rite to be observed by his disciples, merely in grateful remembrance of him, he declared that one of them would betray him; but did not explain who it was. This author, on the contrary, tells us that the last supper he ate with them was *before the feast of the passover*; and, instead of the institution of the Lord's supper, represents our Saviour as suddenly, *after supper was ended*, adopting the very unnecessary, useless and unbecoming ceremony of washing his apostles' feet, a species of extraordinary, unmeaning humiliation, which none of them ever imitated; that, after this ceremony, he told them one of them would betray him; and intimated to one apostle, his favourite above the rest, that it was Judas Iscariot, by giving him a sop, though supper was already over. From hence to his being led to Pilate's judgment-hall, this author's narration differs very greatly from that of St. Luke; and there it flatly contradicts him. For, persisting to say that it was the preparation for the passover, though St. Luke assures us the preceding day was the day on which it was necessary to kill the paschal lamb, and that our Saviour accordingly then ate it with his apostles; the author tells us, that the rulers of the Jews themselves did not go into the judgment-hall, for fear they

* *Dissonance*, pp. 242, 243. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 291, 292.

† Mr. Evanson, after amplifying the term *credulous*, as applied to “the apostles,” into “ignorant, ill-informed, superstitious, credulous old fools,” says to this *Young Man*, “I, Sir, and I hope you, expect the chosen messengers of heaven to be men of a very different character from this; which must as effectually destroy all rational confidence in what they have told us, as if they were convicted of wilful falsehood.” *Letter*, p. 82.

should be defiled so as to be prevented eating the passover ; and that, for that reason, the Roman governor, with an amazing degree of condescension, went out and in from his judgment-seat to them, and from them to the judgment-seat several times. St. Luke, however, in terms as diametrically opposite as truth to falsehood, affirms that the chief priests and elders of the Jews were present at Pilate's examination of our Saviour, and urged the only accusation against him ; and tells us, that after Herod had sent him back to him, Pilate assembled the rulers and people of the Jews, and ' said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people ; and behold I having examined him *before* you have found no fault in him.' When Pilate had consented to gratify them by his crucifixion, this writer says that Jesus himself bare his own cross to the place where he was crucified : St. Luke, that the Jews compelled one Simon, a Cyrenian, to bear the cross after Jesus. St. Luke tells us, that after our Lord's death, Joseph of Arimathea took the body and laid it in a new sepulchre ; that the women were present and saw how and where it was laid ; and went and prepared spices and ointments to embalm it with, as soon as the sabbath was ended. This writer, on the contrary, informs us, that Joseph and Nicodemus together embalmed the body with an hundred pound weight of myrrh and aloes, and other spices, ' as the manner of the Jews is to bury ; ' and then laid it in the sepulchre. St. Luke assures us, that in the evening after our Lord's resurrection, that is, in the beginning of the second day of the week, he appeared to all the *eleven* apostles and other disciples, who were assembled together with them ; and from that time to his ascension was frequently seen by them at Jerusalem ; that he then explained to them the meaning of the prophecies concerning himself, instructed them in the nature and purport of the gospel, and bid them tarry at Jerusalem till the day of pentecost, when they were to receive the Holy Ghost, or holy inspiration ; that they did so, and never returned again to dwell in their own country, Galilee. The pretended John, in contradiction to all this, tells us, that the evening on which the disciples saw our Saviour was the first day of the week, which shews that he was no Jew, but one who reckoned his time like the Greeks and Romans ; that all the eleven apostles were not present ; for that Thomas was not with them, and did not see him till eight days after ; that instead of telling them to wait till pentecost for the gift of

the holy inspiration, he then ‘breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’”*

Now, whatever inconsistency there may be in these respects between *John* and *Luke*, nothing can be inferred from it, but that one of them was better informed than the other; and the probability will be that *John*, who was present, is the more exact of the two. The difficulty about the *preparation of the passover*, I think I have sufficiently explained in the *Dissertations* prefixed to my *Harmony of the Gospels*, where I shewed that it must mean the preparation for that sabbath which fell in the paschal week.†

The washing of the apostles’ feet, though ridiculed by Mr. Evanson, appears to me not at all improbable, and a very instructive action; and not being intended to be imitated literally, I am not surprised that we find no mention of the disciples doing it after him.‡ The words *before you* in *Luke*, [xxiii. 14,] need not to be understood literally, as every thing that had passed was immediately reported to them; so that they knew it as well as if they had been themselves present. And Jesus might begin to carry the cross, but appearing to be unable to do it, it might have been given to another person. What was done to the body of Jesus by *Joseph of Arimathea* might not be known to the women, or they might choose to make some addition to it. *Luke* might not know but that *Thomas* was present the first time that Jesus appeared to the apostles; or *eleven* being their number after the defection of *Judas*, as *twelve* had been before, the phrase might be used by him though one of them was then absent. The other differences in the accounts have been more or less noticed before.

Upon the whole, I see nothing in these remarks of Mr. Evanson but a determination to undervalue the Gospel of *John*, as he had done those of *Matthew* and *Mark*; but without any more specious ground for it; and with the same predilection for any of these three, he might, with as much plausibility, have cried down the Gospel of *Luke*.

Such are the reasons for which Mr. Evanson has been “long induced to reject,” as he says, “three of the four generally-received Gospels, as spurious fictions of the second century, unnecessary, and even prejudicial to the cause of true Christianity, and in every respect unworthy of the

* *Dissonance*, pp. 236—239. (*P.*) *Ed.* 2, pp. 284—288.

† See *supra*, pp. 100—103; on *John* xviii. 28, xix. 14, 31, Vol. XIII. pp. 317, 354, 364.

‡ Yet see, on *John* xiii. 14, Vol. XIII. p. 505, Note ††.

regard which so many ages have paid to them.”* And such are the reasons which lead me to adhere to the hitherto universally-received opinion on the subject. Compare them, and judge for yourself.

I am, &c.

LETTER X.

Of Mr. Evanson's Objections to the Epistle to the Romans.

DEAR SIR,

MR. EVANSON, not content with rejecting three of the four Gospels, has been led, as he says, by “the same train of investigation to reject several of the canonical epistles, upon the sole authority of some of which, several fundamental doctrines of the orthodox church, and of various sects of professed Christians, are confidently taught the people for doctrines of the gospel of Christ. I think it,” he says, “my duty to add briefly my reasons for expunging also out of the volume of duly authenticated scriptures of the *new covenant*, the Epistles to the Romans, to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, to the Hebrews, of James, of Peter, of John, of Jude, and, in the book of the Revelation, the Epistles to the seven churches of Asia.”† He also says, “Not one of these Epistles contains in it that necessary internal testimony of the divine authority of the writer, the spirit of prophecy; whilst St. Paul’s Epistles to the Corinthians, Thessalonians, Galatians, and Timothy, have the historic testimony in their favour strongly corroborated by that and every other internal evidence of authenticity.”‡

Mr. Evanson should say what, in his idea, constitutes a *canonical book* § of the *New Testament*. In my opinion it is nothing more than a book written by an apostle, or other person of their age, well acquainted with the circumstances of the promulgation of Christianity, and therefore qualified to transmit an account of it to posterity, and also of so much importance as to deserve the attention of all Christians.

* *Dissonance*, p. 255. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 305.

† *Ibid.* pp. 255, 256. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 306.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 284. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 336.

§ “To constitute such a book,” replies Mr. Evanson, “in my idea, it is indispensably requisite, that it should be free from all grounds of reasonable doubt and suspicion; that it should have every possible *external* testimony in its favour; and contain every necessary *internal* evidence of its being the work of an apostle or some other primitive disciple of Jesus, commissioned by him, and both naturally and supernaturally qualified to proclaim and teach the religion of the new covenant of the kingdom of God.” *Letter*, p. 83.

Indeed, whatever such persons wrote concerning Christianity would necessarily be entitled to such attention. It is enough, therefore, for us to be satisfied with respect to the *genuineness* of the Epistles ascribed to *Paul* or the other apostles; and the ancients had evidently no other object in their inquiries into this subject. Whether when they wrote they had any prophecy to communicate, depended both upon their having such prophecy, and a sufficient reason for communicating it at that time. And there are many proper occasions of writing, both to churches and particular persons, wholly independent of every thing of this nature. However, it happens that the Epistle to the *Romans* does contain a prophecy, and a very important one, viz. that of the final conversion of the whole of the Jewish nation,* which should have recommended it to the reception of Mr. Evanson. But he has several other objections to it, which I shall not overlook.

1. "In the Epistle to the Romans, the author writes, indeed, in the name of Paul; but he writes to a Christian church already subsisting at Rome, and celebrated for its faith in Christ *throughout the whole world*, before he himself had been there."† He says, "that when Paul arrived at Rome,—there was no Christian church there, as, indeed," he says, "it is not at all probable there should have been.—Who, then," says he, "was that other apostle to the Gentiles, who so far preceded St. Paul, as already to have reached Rome, without preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of the intervening countries of Asia Minor and Greece, and to have founded a church there early enough for its being *spoken of throughout the whole world*, when St. Paul, in the execution of the commission miraculously given to him by Christ himself, had advanced no farther than Macedonia and Greece?"‡

He says, moreover, that "from the last chapter of the Acts it appears incontestably that they were not Christians but Jews who met Paul at Appii Forum; that his first step, when he arrived at Rome, was to call together the Jews resident there, and exculpate himself for having appealed to the emperor; that those Jews, far from knowing the gospel

* Mr. Evanson replies, "that it is merely a reference to pre-existing prophecies attended with such observations upon the state of the Jewish nation at the time of writing the epistle, as plainly shew that it could not be written by any body till after their final dispersion by the Romans." *Letter*, p. 84. See, on *Rom.* xi. 25, Vol. XIV. p. 245.

† *Dissonance*, p. 257. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 307.

Ibid. p. 258. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 308, 309.

to have been already preached and received at Rome, declared themselves totally ignorant concerning it, except that it was every where spoken against, and were desirous to be informed of its doctrines by him.”*

In all this argument, Mr. Evanson takes for granted a thing which is far from appearing to be fact, viz. that no other than apostles could plant Christian churches. But were not the *Samaritans*, and also the *eunuch of Ethiopia*, converted by *Philip*? And did not *Barnabas* and *Mark* go upon a progress to preach the gospel independently of *Paul* and *Silas*? What could be necessary to make converts to Christianity but a credible account of the doctrines and miracles of Christ, though the imparting the gift of the Holy Spirit was useful to confirm such converts? And can Mr. Evanson think it at all probable, that when the metropolis of the empire was constantly visited by persons from all parts of the known world, no Christians should have any occasion to go thither, or that they would be silent on a subject that interested themselves and others so much as the new religion, which they had just embraced, did? Is it at all credible, then, that there should be no Christian church at Rome before the year 62, when *Paul* was sent thither?

Besides, whatever Mr. Evanson may fancy to the contrary, it is evident that they were *Christians* who met *Paul* at *Puteoli* and *Appii Forum*; for they are styled *brethren*, a well-known appellation of Christians, and he received from them that consolation which no other persons could have given him in his circumstances. *Acts* xxviii. 13—15: “And we came the next day to Puteoli, where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days, and so we went towards Rome. And from thence when the brethren heard of us, they met us as far as Appii Forum, and the Three Taverns, whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.” It is very extraordinary that Mr. Evanson should imagine that those *brethren* were any other than *Christian brethren*. That *Paul* should desire to have a conference with the Jews of Rome, was very natural. As he had been sent to Rome on an accusation of the chiefs of the nation, he would wish to have his case understood by those of his countrymen who were at Rome. These Jews were unacquainted with Christianity, and *Paul* took that opportunity of explaining it to them; but it by no means follows

* *Dissonance*, p. 259. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 309.

from this, that there were no Christians then at Rome, and a church, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles.

From very early times, the epistles of *Paul* were publicly read in Christian churches, and among others, in those very churches to which they were addressed, where it could not but have been known whether such epistles had been written to them or not. It is hardly possible to imagine any circumstance that would so effectually preclude all possibility of any imposition of the kind. And yet Mr. Evanson seems never to have attended to it. The canon of the *New Testament* may be said to have been completed long before the memory of such epistles having been received or not, could be lost. If *Paul*, for instance, wrote so large an epistle as that which now bears that title, to the Church of Rome, whatever became of that particular copy, yet, as it had been read to the whole church at the time that it was received, it could never have been forgotten that he *had* written such an epistle. And if any epistle had at any time afterwards been brought to that church, and respect been claimed for it as written by the apostle, it would have been rejected with indignation; and the knowledge of this fact would have caused it to be rejected in all other Christian churches. The same may be said of the epistles addressed to other churches.

2. Mr. Evanson objects to the authenticity of this epistle, because when *Paul* wrote it he signified his intention of going by way of Rome into Spain. "Now," says he, "whoever has read, with proper attention, the history of St. Paul's travels, written by his friend and fellow-traveller, Silas or Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, must be convinced, that St. Paul never had the least idea of travelling into Spain."* But does the writer of that book mention every thing that Paul *intended* to do, when it is evident that he relates only a small part of what he actually *did*?

3. So differently do the same things strike different persons, that the salutations at the end of the Epistle to the *Romans*, which are so like those with which the other epistles of *Paul* terminate, that they furnish one of the clearest proofs of their genuineness, are with Mr. Evanson marks of forgery. "I cannot forbear," he says, "remarking farther, the inconsistency of this writer, which, indeed, must generally be discernible in all falsifiers, in making St. Paul personally acquainted with so long a list of members of the

* *Dissonance*, p. 257. (P.) *Ed.* 2, p. 308.

church of Rome, where he had never been, amongst whom we find Aquila and Priscilla, and even his own mother, to whom he sends his salutation, in the last chapter, ver. 13. Of the two first, St. Luke tells us that, about, or rather before, the pretended date of this epistle, they had left Rome, being Jews, in obedience to an edict of Claudius. And if there is any reason to believe that St. Paul's mother was then living, is it credible that an old woman of Tarsus, in Cilicia, whose son was so wonderfully appointed to preach the Gospel, and who was occupied in that commission in Asia and Greece, should leave her native country and such a son, and ramble after other preachers of the gospel, at so advanced an age, to the far distant metropolis of Italy?"*

Mr. Evanson, however, will find, that when this epistle was written, *Claudius*, by whose edict the Jews had been banished from Rome, was dead, and therefore many of those who had left the place would take the opportunity of returning. It is evident from the clearest circumstances, that the Epistle to the *Romans* was written in the beginning of the year 58,† which was the fifth of Nero. As to Paul's *mother*, it was, probably, some aged matron to whom he was under particular obligation, and to whom he might, on this account, give such an endearing appellation. Or if it was his natural mother, improbable as, no doubt, it was, it was not absolutely impossible but that she might be at Rome.

4. "But in the eleventh chapter," Mr. Evanson says, "the author clearly betrays himself to be, not St. Paul, but some person who lived and wrote some time after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews; for to these events alone can the following sentences refer: Ver. 12: 'If the fall of them' (the Jews) 'be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?' Again, ver. 15: 'If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be?' Again, vers. 21, 22: 'If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off,'" &c.‡

This objection goes upon the principle that Paul could

* *Dissonance*, p. 260. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 310, 311.

† See Vol. XIII. p. 195.

‡ *Dissonance*, pp. 260, 261. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 311, 312.

have no idea of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the subsequent dispersion of the Jews, but after the events. But if this was the case, as the same rule must apply to all other writers as well as *Paul*, *Luke* not excepted, *his* Gospel must have been written after those events. But had *Paul* never heard of our Saviour's prophecies, and if so, might he not allude to the events predicted by him? Besides, he himself saw so much of the incredulity of the Jewish nation, that he might be well satisfied that the time of their general conversion was at a great distance, and their *casting away* means nothing more than their general unbelief.

If the writer of this epistle could not allude to any events but such as he was witness to himself, how could he allude, as he evidently does, to the general conversion of the *Jews*, and the effect it would have upon the *Gentiles*, which has not taken place even yet? This is certainly a prophecy, and, therefore, might have been expected to recommend this epistle to Mr. Evanson. Or, if we consider it as nothing more than a probable conjecture, might he not suppose the allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem to be a conjecture too, and therefore no proof of the epistle having been written after the event?

I am, &c.

LETTER XI.

Of Mr. Evanson's Objection to some other Epistles in the New Testament.

DEAR SIR,

ONE Letter more relating to Mr. Evanson's objections to some other epistles in our canon of the *New Testament*, shall close all that I have to observe of this kind.

1. "The Epistle to the Ephesians," he says, "is also written in the name of St. Paul, but under a supposition that a Christian church was settled at Ephesus, before Paul himself preached the gospel there; for, chap. i. 15, 16, the writer makes him say, 'Wherefore I also, after *I heard of* your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto *all the saints*, cease not to give thanks for you,' &c.; and, chap. iii. 1. &c., 'For this cause, I, Paul, the *prisoner* of Jesus Christ, for you Gentiles, *if ye have heard of* the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, (as *I wrote* afore in few words,) whereby, *when ye read*, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.' This

supposition, however, cannot possibly be allowed by any one who credits the history of the Acts of the Apostles; for in that we are expressly told, chap. xviii., xix., that St. Paul himself preached the gospel at Ephesus, first, in the synagogue of the Jews at two different times, and afterwards in the school of Tyrannus, for the space of two years; and to read over his valedictory discourse to the elders of the church of Ephesus, at Miletus, recorded Acts xx., is amply sufficient to convince every impartial mind, that St. Paul could never have written to the Ephesians in the above-quoted language of this epistle. Some critics, indeed, without the least proof, suggest that this epistle was originally inscribed to the church of Laodicea, and not of Ephesus; but if there was really any satisfactory evidence, that, notwithstanding the great dissimilarity of the names, the transcribers of all the existing copies had conspired to make so extraordinary a change, still the difficulty would not be removed; because, according to the Acts, St. Paul was the first preacher of the gospel at Laodicea also, and every other part of Asia Minor.*

Now, it by no means appears from the *Acts of the Apostles*, that *Paul* could be said to have planted the Christian church at *Ephesus*, though he greatly promoted the Christian cause in that city. *Paul* visited Ephesus for the first time on his way from Corinth to Jerusalem, whither he was making all the haste that he could. He, therefore, only preached in the Jewish synagogue, and immediately left the place. It is not said either that he was the first Christian who had preached there, or that he then made any converts. *Acts* xviii. 18—21.

After this, we find *Apollos* preaching at Ephesus, where he was farther instructed by *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, vers. 24—28. When, after this, *Paul* came to reside at Ephesus, [xix. 1,] he found some persons, twelve men in all, who were only acquainted with the baptism of *John*; but it is not said that these were the only disciples in the place. If so, the preaching of *Apollos* had produced no effect, the contrary of which is strongly intimated. After this, *Paul* continued two years in this city. How, then, is it any just objection to the genuineness of this Epistle to the *Ephesians*, which has the unanimous testimony of all antiquity, confirmed by many internal marks, that *Paul* should mention his *hearing of their faith*?

* *Dissonance*, pp. 261, 262. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 312, 313.

Besides, considering how long *Paul* had been absent from *Ephesus*, his saying that he had *heard of their faith* was by no means unnatural, though he himself had been the first to preach among them; since in the mean time they might have swerved from the faith, or at least their zeal might have abated.

Though the epistles of *Ignatius* and *Polycarp* are, I believe, greatly interpolated, and especially the former, yet there is evidence that they did write such epistles as those that are ascribed to them, and, therefore, where there was no apparent reason for falsifying, I think they afford some arguments with respect to this subject, as well as others. Now *Ignatius* appears to have read the Epistle to the *Ephesians*, and *Polycarp* that to the *Philippians*, both of which are objected to by Mr. Evanson.

2. "The same insuperable objection," says Mr. Evanson, "lies against the Epistle to the Colossians, which is manifestly fabricated by the same opificer who composed that to the Ephesians. In chap. i. 4—9, the author makes St. Paul say, that it was Epaphras who first preached the gospel to the Colossians; and that it was from him he had *heard of* their faith and love in Christ Jesus. And, chap. ii. 1, he makes him expressly declare, that neither they nor the Laodiceans *had seen his face in the flesh*. Yet Colosse and Laodicea were both cities of Phrygia, where St. Luke assures us,* St. Paul, accompanied by himself, repeatedly preached the gospel to every city *in order*."†

But from its being said that Paul went over the cities of this district *in order*, it cannot be inferred that he missed none of them, or that he founded Christian churches in any of them. Such great cities as *Ephesus*, *Antioch*, and *Alexandria*, (which last place we do not know to have ever been visited by any apostle,) were, like *Rome*, places of such general resort, that it cannot be supposed that they could be long without Christians; and the same might have been the case of *Colosse*, and other cities.

3. Mr. Evanson's objections to the genuineness of the Epistle to the *Philippians*, and also to that to *Titus*, he owns are not so strong as those against the preceding epistles, though, in his estimation, they "render them both highly apocryphal."‡ His first objection is, that the writer first mentions "*the saints*, or Christians" in general, and then

* "Acts xvi. 6, xviii. 23." *Dissonance*, p. 263. Ed. 2, p. 314.

† *Ibid.* (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* (P.)

“the bishops and deacons, which,” he says, “is not to be found in any other epistolary address of St. Paul; and which, if it be not an interpolation, savours very strongly of a much later age than that of the apostles.”* If, however, there were regular officers in Christian churches, as we know there were, in the time of the apostles, how could it be unlikely that *Paul* should mention them separately, after speaking of the Christians in general?

4. Mr. Evanson also thinks that there could not have been, as is intimated in this epistle, any Christians in “Nero’s court,—a fact in the highest degree improbable, and far from being confirmed by Luke or any Roman historian; and that many disciples of the gospel, who, to be many, must have been converted before St. Paul’s arrival at Rome, which St. Luke’s history makes quite incredible, emboldened by his success, preached the gospel there at the same time that he did, some of them, good Christians! only enviously, for contention and strife’s sake, in hopes to vex and tease him; all which seems irreconcilable to the account given us in the last chapter of the Acts.”†

Since, however, some persons of rank were converted in *Judea*, and in other places, where is the peculiar improbability of some such converts being made at *Rome*? Ecclesiastical history makes this more than probable with respect to times a little posterior to these. But as this circumstance would be favourable to the existence of a Christian church at Rome before the arrival of *Paul* there, which would give some probability to the genuineness of the Epistle to the *Romans*, Mr. Evanson cannot admit it.

5. Mr. Evanson thinks that *Paul* could not use such language as, “Beware of dogs, and of the concision.”‡ He also thinks that he could not have had any *yoke-fellow*, as is mentioned (iv. 3); or speak of the *Lord being at hand* (ver. 5); and that, no accusation being sent to Rome by the Jews against *Paul*, he could not have been under *affliction* there.§ But surely it cannot be necessary to reply to such trifling objections as these.

* *Dissonance*, p. 264. *Ed.* 2, pp. 314, 315.

† *Ibid.* pp. 264, 265. (*P.*)

‡ “The latter,” Mr. E. says, “seems a very improper, unbecoming manner of speaking of a divine ordinance, which, as the Mosaic covenant was not then actually abrogated, still subsisted and was even practised by St. Paul himself on his disciple Timothy, though he was only the son of a Jewish mother by a Greek father. And if by the former we are to understand the Cynic philosophers, what was there in their numbers, doctrines, or lives, that could make St. Paul point them out as so peculiarly inimical to Christianity above the other philosophic sects?” *Dissonance*, p. 265. See, on *Phil.* iii. 2, Vol. XIV. pp. 315, 316.

§ *Dissonance*, pp. 265, 266. *Ed.* 2, pp. 316, 317.

6. His objections to the Epistle to *Titus* are still more manifestly weak. "The very introductory address," he says, "excites in my mind a strong suspicion that it was not written by St. Paul; for he calls himself, what he never does in any other epistle, *a servant* of God; though to the Galatians, chap. iv. 6, 7, he says, 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father: wherefore thou art no more *a servant*, but a son,' &c. He adds also, 'An apostle of Jesus Christ,' (not *by the will of God*, as he usually expresses it, but,) 'according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledging of the truth,' all which, in St. Paul's mouth, is quite a new kind of language."* He is next offended at a quotation from "a Greek poet,—and the poet himself denominated a prophet;" and at the writer including himself in saying, that "we ourselves were sometimes foolish," &c.†

7. To the Epistle to *Philemon*, which contains as many marks of genuineness as any of the epistles of *Cicero*, he objects to the mention "of his fellow-prisoner, though," he says, "we learn from the Acts that he himself was the only Christian prisoner sent thither by Festus, and that he was permitted 'to dwell by himself, with a soldier that kept him.'"[‡]

I fear I have tired your patience by many unnecessary replies to objections to the other epistles, and therefore I leave these, as I am confident I very safely may, without any answers at all. As to the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, the authenticity of which, though not its antiquity, was objected to in very early times, I have little doubt of its having been written by *Paul*, though his name is not annexed to it, and the style is different from that of his other epistles. I likewise pass over Mr. Evanson's objections to the Epistle of *James*, those of *Peter*, and of *John*.§

I cannot conclude these remarks without observing, that had Mr. Evanson read that truly masterly piece of criticism, the *Horæ Paulinæ* of Mr. Paley,|| he would have saved himself the trouble of writing his treatise, and me that of answering it. The epistles that he objects to contain more,

* *Dissonance*, pp. 267, 268. (P.) *Ed.* 2, pp. 318, 319.

† *Ibid.* p. 268. See, on *Titus* i. 12, iii. 3, Vol. XIV. pp. 147, 150.

‡ *Dissonance*, p. 269. (P.) § See *ibid.* pp. 275—283. *Ed.* 2, pp. 327—335.

|| Mr. Evanson says, that he "read that work almost as soon as it was published;" and wishes "that every professional teacher of religion would imitate the worthy archdeacon's highly meritorious example in so diligent, rational and useful a mode of studying the Sacred Scriptures." *Letter*, p. 89.

and more various, internal marks of genuineness than perhaps any other ancient writings whatever. And the genuineness of *Paul's* epistles furnishes as strong a proof of the truth of Christianity, as that of *Cicero's* does of the general facts in the Roman history of his times. The only thing that is wanting is a due attention to the circumstances.

I am, &c.

LETTER XII.

Of the arbitrary Proceeding of Mr. Evanson in making the Gospel of Luke his Standard, by which to examine the other Gospels.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING replied, as far as I have thought necessary, to all the objections that Mr. Evanson has made to the authenticity of the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*,* and to that of several of the epistles universally deemed *canonical*, I am tempted to give you one Letter more, to shew you how easy it is to make such objections; and with how little reason Mr. Evanson has fixed upon the Gospel of *Luke* as his standard, by which to try all the others.

Had Mr. Evanson been previously disposed to object to the Gospel of *Luke*, as he was with respect to those of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*, he would, I doubt not, have found as little difficulty in the business; and his ingenuity would have exhibited the passages he objected to in a light equally ridiculous. This I shall not attempt to do for him. I should feel an invincible reluctance to it. But I shall just mention a few circumstances of the kind, to shew that there is no real difference in the several evangelists in this respect. They are equally entitled to our highest respect, though, from their peculiar circumstances, equally open to superficial and unreasonable cavils.

The quantity of interpolation that Mr. Evanson supposes in the Gospel of *Luke*, makes it little better than a spurious work. He intimates a suspicion, that besides the two first chapters of introduction, the story of the demon going into

* Mr. Evanson complains, that Dr. Priestley has left unnoticed "the proofs urged that the pretended Matthew and John could not be Jews, because their writings shew that they did not even reckon their time as the Jews did, with several other objections, which do not apply to Luke." *Letter*, pp. 90, 91.

the swine,* the circumstance of Jesus promising the thief on the cross to be with him in Paradise that night, and the account of the transfiguration, that of the genealogy of Jesus, of the temptation, and of his baptism, are all interpolations. "It well deserves our notice," he says, "that if we pass from the account of John's imprisonment by Herod, chap. iii. 20, to chap. iv. 14, and read, *Then came Jesus*, instead of, *and Jesus returned*, the histories both of John and Jesus proceed regularly and in order; and the ministry of the Messiah, as is most probable, commenced upon the cessation of the Baptist's ministry by his being shut up in prison.† But if the account of our Lord's being baptized by John is genuine, Herod's imprisoning the latter is related very much out of its proper order, and St. Luke has given us no date for the commencement of our Lord's ministry, though he has been so particularly exact in fixing the date of the commencement of John's preaching. Besides, John was sent only to prepare the people for the reception of the Messiah and his new covenant, by preaching to them *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*; and (to say nothing of *the bodily shape like a dove*, which savours strongly of the superstition of the second century)

* Mr. Evanson thinks the story of the demon's going into the herd of swine an interpolation in the Gospel of *Luke*, chiefly because, if it be admitted to be genuine, Jesus will be found "on the eastern side of the Lake" of Galilee, "without the slightest insinuation of having crossed the lake again.—If," says he, "this very exceptionable miracle be an interpolation, and not part of the original writing of St. Luke, the narrative proceeds consistently and regularly; but if it be taken as authentic, there is such a geographical confusion and disorder in this part of the history, as occurs no where else in this author's works; and such as can neither be allowed nor indeed supposed in an historian, who, writing upon a subject of the greatest importance, sets out with professing to write accurately and in order." *Dissonance*, pp. 27, 28. [*Ed. 2*, pp. 47, 48.]

Now all this supposed confusion arises from nothing more than the evangelist omitting to say in what manner Jesus and his disciples came to that desert place. Had he said *by sea*, there would have been no room for the objection, and surely a mere omission implies no contradiction. It is remarkable, that all the other evangelists particularly mention the passage to this desert place *by sea*, so that if Mr. Evanson, without considering their writings as authentic, had only read them as ancient books which might occasionally supply a commentary on the Gospel of *Luke*, he would have had his great difficulty removed. *Matthew* says, (xiv. 13,) "When Jesus heard of it," viz. the death of *John the Baptist*, "he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart." *Mark* says, (vi. 32,) "And they departed into a desert place by ship privately." *John*, (vi. 1,) "After these things, Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias." But *Luke* says the same in effect; for he says, (ix. 10,) "And he took them and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida;" which being on the east side of the lake, clearly implies that they crossed the sea. How natural is it to remark, that this variety in expressing the same thing, proves that all these writers wrote from their own knowledge, without any communication with each other; and that *John*, though he might have seen the other Gospels, did not copy them! (P.)

† "See *Acts x. 37*." *Dissonance*, p. 55, *Note*. Omitted *ed. 2*, p. 81.

with what propriety could he, *who knew no sin*, receive such a baptism; or the destined Messiah attend the preaching of his own precursor to be prepared by him for the coming of himself? And what probability is there, that our Lord would have studiously avoided calling himself *the Son of God* during his whole ministry, and forbidden his disciples before his death to announce him as such to the Jews, if God himself had miraculously declared him to be so by a voice from heaven, in the audience of so great a multitude? Or how could John, after such an attestation, have ever entertained a doubt whether Jesus was the expected Messiah?"* Rather than suppose so many interpolations, which other persons are at liberty to extend to other articles, as much as Mr. Evanson was to extend it to these, it would have been more in his manner to have treated this Gospel as he has done the other three, and have considered them all as equally fabrications of the second century: for so much interpolation makes it a work as little to be depended upon, and as unsafe to quote.

Had Mr. Evanson taken it for granted that *Luke* wrote the two first chapters of his Gospel, as, with much less reason, he has done, that the writer of *Matthew's* Gospel did the two first of *his*, he would have found many more improbabilities in them, especially those that I have noted in what I have written on the subject of the miraculous conception. He would, with his sarcastic turn, have treated with unbounded contempt the whole story of the conception and birth of *John the Baptist*, the speech of the angel Gabriel, the exclamation of Elizabeth on the visit of Mary, the prophecy of *Zacharias*, as well as those of Simeon and Anna, the story of the shepherds, and the account of the taxing by *Cyrenius*, which is clearly inconsistent with the history of *Josephus*, &c. &c. &c.

If Mr. Evanson had pitched upon the Gospel of *Matthew* as his standard, he would have condemned the genealogy of Jesus in *Luke*, as inconsistent with that of the other evangelist. He might have said that the history of the call of Levi, (*Luke* v. 27,) must have arisen from some mistake, as the writer has not informed his reader, either there, or in his enumeration of the twelve apostles afterwards, that he was the same person with *Matthew*.† The story of *Jairus* he

* *Dissonance*, pp. 55, 56, *Note*. (P.) Omitted *ed.* 2, p. 81.

† Of which Mr. Evanson professes himself to be doubtful. See *supra*, p. 390. *Note* †.

would have said is evidently misplaced, and the whole order of events disarranged. But what is of much more consequence, and betrays the want of information in a writer who pretends to the greatest circumspection, is his account of the resurrection of Jesus, which is essentially different not only from that of the other evangelists, but from that of *Paul*, in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. [xv. 6.] For, according to this Gospel, Jesus saw none but the eleven apostles, and the two disciples who went to *Emmaus*, [Luke xxiv. 15, 33, 36,] and after shewing himself to them, immediately led them to the place of his ascension, without a possibility of his being seen by the “five hundred brethren” that *Paul* mentions, to say nothing of the separate appearances to *Cephas* and *James*.

Mr. Evanson objects to the Gospel of *Matthew* for representing Jesus as sentencing the wicked to “everlasting punishment.”* But according to that of *Luke*, [iii. 17,] *John the Baptist* dooms the unbelieving Jews to “unquenchable fire;”† and in the parable of the rich man and *Lazarus*, Mr. Evanson would have found too much countenance for the unscriptural doctrine of an intermediate state.‡

With the same turn of mind with which Mr. Evanson censures many things in the Gospel of *Matthew*, he would have smiled at *Luke’s* account [iii. 22] of the descent of the Holy Spirit in the *shape* of a dove, whereas, according to other evangelists, the descent only *resembled* that of a dove.§ The history of the *temptation* might have been made more improbable than that of the *transfiguration*, and the account of the cure of the *demoniac* who addressed Jesus as “the Holy one of God,” (*Luke* iv. 34,) he would have said, was

* Ch. xxv. 46. See Vol. XIII. p. 302.

† See *ibid.* p. 31.

‡ Mr. Evanson says, “It is still more surprising that, on such an occasion, Dr. Priestley should refer you to the parable of the rich man and *Lazarus*; for it is an apologue founded upon the popular, superstitious ideas of the Jews, with a view, like that of all other apologues, to enforce upon them a particular doctrine.—Its sole and obvious intent,” he adds, “was to teach the hearers, and through them all mankind, that the *testimony of prophecy* is the only necessary, the only satisfactory evidence of the certainty of revealed religion: and that wherever that fails, the greatest of miracles would be unable to work conviction.” *Letter*, p. 92. See, on *Luke* xvi. 22—31, Vol. XIII. pp. 249—251.

§ See, on *Matt.* iii. 17, Vol. XIII. p. 27. From the phraseology of *Luke* must have originated a common ornament in the churches of the Establishment; and that gross couplet in the Hymns of *Watts*,

“Amidst those ever-shining skies,
Behold the sacred Dove.”

not less improbable than that of the man who was possessed by a legion of demons. [viii. 30, *Mark* v. 9.]

With respect to our Saviour, there are many things ascribed to him in *Luke*, which Mr. Evanson might have thought as unlikely to come from him as any that, on the same account, he objects to in the Gospel of *Matthew*. He thinks it impossible that Jesus should have given to the apostles the power of *forgiving sins*; but it is what, according to *Luke*, (v. 20,) is assumed by Jesus himself.* He doth not think that *Paul* would have used such abusive language as is ascribed to him in the Epistles to the *Philippians*, "beware of dogs," &c.† But according to *Luke*, (xiii. 32,) Jesus calls *Herod* "that fox;"‡ he insists upon his followers *hating their fathers and mothers*, &c. &c. (xiv. 26);§ he commends the unjust steward (xvi. 8);|| he compares God to an unjust judge, who was teased into an act of justice (xviii. 1—8);¶ he condemns** a well-disposed young man, who had kept all the commands of God, because he would not sell all that he had and follow him (xviii. 22); and he says, (xv. 7,) joy "shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

I need not tell you, who have read Mr. Evanson, and justly admire his ingenuity, what turn he would have given to these things, and others of the same nature, in order to discredit the *gospel* which contains them. And if I were to look into those *epistles* which he allows to be genuine, it would be no less easy to point out things as objectionable in *them* as in the rest. But, in fact, I should only be repeating the stale remarks and low jests of unbelievers, which it would be easy to collect, and more easy to answer.

In so different a light did the learned *Michaelis* and Mr. Evanson see the same things, that the former, speaking of the Gospel of *Luke*, says, "Perhaps I am not mistaken when I assert, that as many doubts," from apparent contradictions with ancient writers, "may be raised against St. Luke alone, as against the other apostles and evangelists put together."††

* See, on *Matt.* ix. 3, 6, Vol. XIII. pp. 102, 103.

† See *supra*, p. 454.

‡ See Vol. XIII. p. 205.

§ See *ibid.* p. 245.

|| The commendation is attributed to the master of the steward rather than to Jesus. See *ibid.* p. 249, Note *.

¶ See *ibid.* pp. 252, 253.

** This expression is scarcely correct. See *ibid.* p. 259.

†† "Introduction to the New Testament," l. p. 54. (P.) Mr. Evanson replies, "The instances of this apparent contradiction, which Michaelis first examines in the following pages, are all taken from the *Acts of the Apostles*. After

But how light he made of these objections, may be seen by his comparing them to the objections that might be made to the authenticity of the *Commentaries of Julius Cæsar*, which, that you may compare them with those of Mr. Evanson against that of the Gospels of *Matthew, Mark, and John*, I shall quote at full length.

“It is generally thought sufficient to shew the writings of a classic author to be genuine, if some one among the ancients has merely spoken of the work, as Cicero, Hirtius, and Suetonius have done of Cæsar’s descriptions of his own campaigns, without quoting passages from the book itself. But it may be objected, ‘It is possible, indeed, that Cæsar may have written such a treatise, but how can we be certain, that the *Commentaries* which we ascribe to him as their author, were the same which Cicero, Hirtius, and Suetonius read? Is it credible that Cæsar was the author of an history in which so frequent remarks are interspersed to the disparagement of the Germans, remarks which excite even a suspicion of their timidity, when it is said in the very beginning of the work, that the Gauls themselves acknowledged the Germans to be their superiors in bravery? Can suspicions like these proceed from a general who was in a great measure indebted to his German auxiliaries for the victory of Pharsalia, a circumstance again omitted to be mentioned in the *Bellum Civile*? Are these the *Commentaries* so commended by Cicero and Hirtius, and to which the latter applied the observation: *prærepta, non præbita facultas scriptoribus videtur*? Could these *Commentaries* have existed in the days of Florus, who likewise describes the battle of Pharsalia, and estimates the number in both armies at 300,000, besides the auxiliaries, when the number given in the *Commentaries* is so considerably inferior? Could Florus have been better acquainted with the state of the army than Cæsar, and would he have neglected to derive his intelligence from the best possible accounts, had such accounts at that time existed?’

“Objections like these to the authenticity of Cæsar would be answered by every critic in classical literature, not with a serious reply, but with a smile of contempt. Yet, weak and trivial as these arguments may appear, they are stronger

shewing that those cases when properly investigated tend only to corroborate Luke’s credit as an historian, he does indeed adduce one and only one instance in his *Gospel* of real and direct contradiction to Josephus, and to both the public annals and particular historians of the Roman empire.—The fabulous story of the taxation in the second chapter, which the Doctor himself rejects as a spurious interpolation.” *Letter*, pp. 94, 95.

than such as can with justice be applied to the writings of the New Testament, which are not only mentioned by the earliest fathers, as being written by those evangelists and apostles, to whom we ascribe them, but quoted and explained at such considerable length, as leaves no possibility of a doubt that the writings to which they allude, are the very same with those which have been transmitted to us under that title.”*

I think I cannot conclude these Letters better than with this valuable extract, and therefore, submitting all that I have advanced to your attentive consideration,

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours, sincerely,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Clapton, Aug. 1793.

* “Introduction to the New Testament,” I. p. 25. Mr. Evanson replies, “The circumstances attending the Gospels and the writings of any profane author are totally dissimilar. The same testimony which assures me that Cæsar or Cicero wrote a book, informs me also that no other such book was written upon the same subject; therefore when I find that book, and on a perusal perceive it to correspond to the account given of it by contemporary writers, and consider that there is no probability of their having had any motive to impose an useless falsehood upon posterity, I doubt not of its being the genuine work of the author to whom it is attributed, especially since whether it be so or not is of very trifling importance. But with respect to the evangelical histories, the same historic evidence which tells me that any, informs me also that many Gospels were written by different authors, several of whom could not be depended upon for the fidelity of their narration and the *certainty* (compare Luke i. 1, 4) of the facts recorded by them.” *Letter*, p. 96.

The following conclusion of Mr. Evanson’s *Letter* will be acceptable to all serious Christians of whatever judgment, as to his theory respecting the Canon of the New Testament.

“Nominal philosophers, indeed, may so far abuse their reason, as to pretend to believe that an universe, in the whole and in each of its parts fitted and manifestly designed for particular, wise, and intelligible ends, subsists without a predisposing, intelligent cause; but the far greater part of a race of rational creatures can never think so unreasonably. The great bulk of mankind, therefore, must always be convinced of the being of a God.

“For similar reasons, whenever, instead of assuming the mere external forms of religion, as they do any other early habit, or as a badge of party, men shall be induced to make their religious faith an object of their reason and understanding; shall attentively consider these several prophecies, predicted so many ages previous to the events, by which they were to be completed; and shall become sensible of their wonderfully exact completion, in part already past, and in part speedily approaching; finding it impossible to account for such predictions and their accomplishment, upon the principles of chance or human foresight, unless they act so irrationally, as well as unphilosophically, as to admit that effects, evidently displaying intelligence and premeditated design, can exist without an intelligent, efficient cause, they must plainly see the extraordinary interposition of the Deity in the course of human affairs, and be convinced of the divine authority of both the Mosaic and Christian Revelations.” *Letter*, pp. 109, 110.

A
LETTER
TO
AN ANTIPÆDOBAPTIST.

Posterior nostra res non est, imo omnibus prior est. Hoc erit testimonium veritatis, ubique occupantis principatum. Ab apostolis utique non damnatur, imo defenditur. Hoc erit indicium proprietatis, quam enim non damnant, qui extraneam quamque damnaverunt, suam ostendunt, imo defendunt.

TERTULLIAN.

[*Northumberland*, 1802.]

A LETTER

TO

AN ANTIPÆDOBAPTIST.*

DEAR SIR,

THE reading of “the History of Baptism,” † by the late Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, a man whom, on many accounts, I greatly esteemed, has drawn my attention to the subject ; ‡ and well knowing your candour and love of truth, I am encouraged, notwithstanding our difference in opinion and practice, to lay the result of my reflections before you. The subject, we agree, is not of the first importance, but every thing relating to our religion is of *some* ; and the most distant relation of any thing to a great object gives us an interest in it. You will also agree with me in acknowledging that, with respect both to doctrines and discipline, our safest guide is what was taught and practised by the apostles, and that, exclusive of their own writings, this is best ascertained by the opinions and practices of those Christians who lived so near to their times, that they could not but have been acquainted with them, and who, we are sure, would conform to them.

As I do not mean to trouble you with the *scripture doctrine* on the subject, since this has been so often discussed that nothing new can well be urged with respect to it, I shall confine myself to the evidence of what was the doctrine and practice of the primitive Christians, those who lived nearest to the time of the apostles. And by means of the writings of several persons in these circumstances, it appears to me

* Dr. Priestley had here “a particular view” to Dr. Toulmin. See Vol. XVII. p. 401. Dr. T. published, in 1786, “A short Essay on Baptism, intended to elucidate the Question concerning the Extent and Perpetuity of its Obligation.”

† 1790. See Vol. XV. p. 409, *Note*.

‡ See Dr. Priestley’s earlier attention to the subject, *Appendix*, No. XIII. ; Vol. II. p. 334 ; V. pp. 270—276.

not to be very difficult to ascertain, in a very satisfactory manner, what were the opinions and practices of those Christians who were personally acquainted with the apostles. For though there is a chasm of about forty years between the death of *John*, the last of the apostles, and *Justin Martyr*, the earliest Christian writer concerning whose works there is no dispute among the learned, there were several intervening writers with whose works those who lived in the time of *Justin* were acquainted. And if there had been no writers at all in that interval, it is not so great, but that the knowledge of what was thought and done prior to it might have been preserved by tradition.

Besides, the number of Christian churches was so great, and they were so dispersed over the whole extent of the Roman empire, that some of them, no doubt, must have retained the apostolical doctrines and practices for so small a space of time. And yet, distant as many of these churches were from each other, they had a constant intercourse; as appears from the frequent appeals that were made from one church to another, and from persons excommunicated in any one church not being received in another.

This is evident from the history of those who were deemed heretics, and of the controversy concerning the time of keeping *Easter*. Other articles were also discussed in general councils, at which bishops from all parts of the Roman empire attended. We see that persons situated at the greatest distance, as *Austin*, in Africa, and *Jerome*, in Palestine, corresponded with each other. Besides, Rome being the metropolis of the empire, nothing could be transacted in any part of it that was not presently known there; and the bishops of that city were ready enough to notice and to censure, whatever they thought to be an innovation with respect to doctrine or discipline in the church.

As quotations from the early Christian writers on this subject are exceedingly numerous, and many of them of little weight, I shall confine myself to a few that appear to me to be of the greatest importance. I shall also endeavour to bring all the arguments into as small a compass as possible; thinking that the mind will be more impressed with them in this condensed state, than if they were more dilated; since, in consequence of this, the impression made by one is in danger of being effaced before another is presented. The greater part of my quotations from the Christian fathers will be found in *Wall's* excellent "History of Infant Bap-

tism.* Many of them I have examined; but much of this part of my library having been destroyed in the Riots in Birmingham, I have not been able to verify them all. There cannot, however, be any doubt of the fidelity of Mr. Wall, to whose work I sometimes content myself with referring.

SECTION I.

Presumptive Evidence in favour of the Antiquity of Infant Baptism.

I THINK there are several arguments, though only of the *presumptive* kind, in favour of the baptism of infants having been the practice of the earliest times of Christianity, of such a nature as that we may infer it with a great degree of certainty, without any direct evidence of the fact.

1. In the earliest times after the age of the apostles, we find the opinion of the absolute *necessity of baptism to salvation*, which arose, no doubt, from the literal interpretation of what our Lord said, (*Mark* xvi. 16,) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." And as it was not denied that infants might be saved, it may be inferred with certainty that no Christian parent would withhold from his child the necessary means of so great a benefit.† *Hermas*, whose *Shepherd* is very

* For which, on its publication in 1705, the author received the thanks of "the whole clergy in convocation." Dr. Atterbury declared, that he "deserved the thanks not of the English clergy alone, but of all Christian churches." See Dr. Gale's "Reflections on Mr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism," 1711, *Adv.* The author of the History, however, except the title of D.D., in his old age, does not appear to have received, if he ever solicited, any ecclesiastical reward. He was probably a diligent and contented parish priest rather than an aspiring churchman.

There was a third and much enlarged edition of the History in 1720, which I shall quote in these notes. Dr. Priestley appears to have used the first or second edition.

Dr. Wall was "Vicar of Shoreham, in Kent," where he died in 1728, aged 82. To his "Critical Notes on the Old Testament," a posthumous publication, I have been frequently indebted in Vols. XI. XII.

† "They soon began to talk in very lofty hyperboles concerning the powerful effects and necessity of baptism; and—several of the first fathers do pretty plainly shew us, they thought that such as died without baptism could not be saved, or at least that their salvation was very doubtful.—This prepared them to mistake our Lord's words, (*John* iii. 5,) which they began to think expressly asserted, it was impossible for any of *Adam's* race to be saved without baptism; and upon this supposition no wonder if they were soon prevailed on, by their natural tenderness and affection, to secure the salvation of their beloved infants, which lie too near a parent's heart to be neglected in so weighty a point as that of their eternal felicity. And could it be made appear that this is the true sense of our SAVIOUR's words, we should soon be brought to believe he intended infants should be baptized." *Gale's Reflections*, 1711, pp. 544, 545.

ancient,* and always quoted with approbation by the earliest Christian writers extant, says, "Before a man receives the name of *a son of God*, he is ordained unto death; but when he receives that seal, he is free from death, and assigned unto life. Now that seal is *water*, into which men go down under obligation to death, but come up appointed to life."†

The necessity of baptism to salvation is also asserted in "the Recognitions of Clement," (a work, in one form or other, in my opinion, prior to the writings of *Justin Martyr*,)‡ as undoing what we suffer in our first birth from Adam. "Quid confert aquæ baptismus ad Dei cultum?—Quia regenerato ex aquis, et Deo renato, fragilitas prioris nativitatis, quæ tibi per hominem facta est, amputatur; et ita demum pervenire poteris ad salutem. Aliter vero impossibile est."§ Indeed it is something remarkable, that all the ancient Christian writers, without exception, speak of baptism as absolutely necessary to salvation. Even *Gregory Nazianzen*, who advised the deferring of baptism till the age of three years, made no objection to the baptism of the youngest infants when they were in danger of death. "But, say some," as he is quoted by Mr. Robinson himself, "what is your opinion of infants who are not capable of judging either of the grace of baptism, or of the damage sustained by the want of it? Shall we baptize them too? By all means, *if there be any apparent danger*. For it were better they were sanctified without their knowing it, than that they should die without being sealed and initiated."||

It cannot be denied that in the primitive times all who had been baptized, though they were ever so young, received the Lord's supper; and this was considered as equally ne-

* About A. D. 100. *Lardner*, II. p. 51.

† *Pastor*, L. iii. *Simil.* ix. C. xvi. (P.) "Antequam enim accipiat homo nomen filii Dei, morti destinatus est: at ubi accipit illud sigillum, liberatur à morte et traditur vitæ. Illud autem sigillum aqua est, in quam descendunt homines morti obligati, ascendunt vero vitæ assignati." *Wall*, (ed. 3.) I. p. 4.

The words immediately following this quotation are, "Et illis igitur prædicatum est illud sigillum, et usi sunt eo ut intrarent in regnum Dei;" thus translated by *Wall*: "For which reason to these also was this seal preached; and they made use of it that they might enter into the kingdom of God." *Ibid.* pp. 4, 5.

Hence *Gale* remarks, that "St. Hermas's expressions can refer only to adult persons, to whom the word may and ought to be preached;" and that "whoever are understood in these words, he makes preaching to them full as necessary as their being baptized." *Reflections*, p. 409.

‡ See *Lardner*, II. pp. 342—354.

§ L. vi. C. v. "Of what use is baptism in religion? *Ans.* To a person regenerated with water, and born again to God, the imperfection of the former natural birth is done away; and thus you attain to salvation, which otherwise is impossible." (P.)

|| "Hist. of Baptism," 1790, pp. 249, 250. (P.) See *Wall*, (ed. 3.) I. p. 119.

cessary to salvation.* Thus Innocent I. bishop of Rome, A. D. 417, to prove the necessity of baptism to infants, says, (quoting *John* vi. 53,) “Nisi enim manducaverint carnem Filii hominis, et biberint sanguinem ejus, non habebunt vitam in semetipsis.”† Taking for granted that, being baptized, they of course received the eucharist. No person appears to have had the good sense to maintain that baptism with water was not necessary to salvation before *Vincentius*,‡ who was contemporary with *Jerome* and *Austin*.

2. The phrase *born again* was by all the most ancient Christian writers used as synonymous to being *baptized*, and this phrase *Irenæus* applies to infants, as well as to persons of every other age. For, giving his reasons for Christ going through every stage of human life, (with the strength or weakness of which argument we have nothing to do,) he says, “Omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare: omnes inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes, et parvulos, et pueros, et juvenes, et seniores.”§ Here the term *infantes* must necessarily signify what we mean by *infants*, or *babes*, as distinguished from those of the succeeding ages, *pueros*, boys, and *juvenes*, young men full grown.

* See Vol. II. p. 337; V. pp. 266, 267; *Wall*, (ed. 3.) II. pp. 435—447; *Gale*, pp. 528, 546; *Wall*’s *Defence* against *Gale*, 1720, p. 384.

† *Binii Concilia*, I. p. 623. “Except they eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, they will have no life in them.”

Cyprian relates, as of his own knowledge, [*præsente ac teste me ipso*,] the case of a female child, which, being left to the care of a nurse, and having been made to eat some bread mixed with wine of a Heathen sacrifice, [*quod carnem necdum posset edere per ætatem, panem mero mixtum, quod tamen ipsum de immolatione pereuntium supererat, tradiderunt*,] could not afterwards be made to partake of the eucharistical elements without hiccupping and vomiting. “Tunc sequitur singultus et vomitus. In corpore atque ore violato eucharistia permanere non potuit.” *De Lapsis, Opera*, p. 132. This treatise is by the Oxford editor referred to the year 251, and it is evident from the narrative that this communion of infants was not a singular case, but an established practice. (*P.*) See the passage of *Cyprian*, with a translation, in Mr. James Peirce’s posthumous “*Essay in favour of the Ancient Practice of giving the Eucharist to Children*,” 1728, pp. 36—38.

‡ “A young Layman,” who wrote against *Austin*’s opinion “that the soul is by propagation.” According to *Austin*, he “is the first that ever advised the prayers of the church to be used for any that had died unbaptized.” *Wall*, (ed. 3.) I. pp. 384, 385, 393.

Dr. Wall says, “There has been lately [1705] a hot dispute between Colonel Danvers, an Antipædobaptist, on one side, and Mr. Baxter and Mr. Wills on the other, whether this *Vincentius* denied infant baptism.” Dr. Wall adds, “If we except *Tertullian*, (whose words I shewed before to be ambiguous and inconsistent,) this *Vincentius* is the first man upon record that ever said that children might be saved without baptism; if by being saved we mean going to heaven: for that many before him thought they would be in a state without punishment.” *Ibid*. pp. 393, 394.

§ *Adv. Hæres.* L. ii. C. xxxix. “He came to save all by himself. I say all who by him are born again to God, infants and little ones, and boys, and young men, and elderly persons.” (*P.*) See *Wall*, (ed. 3.) I. pp. 24, 25.

Baptism was also in the primitive times denominated by other terms, which equally imply the necessity of it to future happiness. *Chrysostom*, in a work of his cited by *Julian* and *Austin*, though not now extant, after denying that infants had any original sin, and enumerating ten advantages derived from baptism, says, "For this cause we baptize infants also, though they are not defiled with sin, that there may be superadded to them saintship, righteousness, adoption, inheritance, a brotherhood with Christ, and to be made members of him." *

In agreement with this, *Austin*, and no doubt all other Christian writers, interpreted what *Paul* says of children being *holy*, (1 Cor. vii. 14,) of their being entitled to baptism, and therefore he says, "Jam enim erant parvuli Christiani, qui sive auctore uno ex parentibus, sive utroque consentiente, sanctificati erant." † And sometimes Christian writers have denominated the one by the other: "Sancti, inquit, de sanctis nasci debuerunt, sicut dicit apostolus; alioqui filii vestri immundi essent, nunc autem sancti sunt. Et quomodo hoc accipis? Quomodo intelligis de fidelibus natum, et sanctam, et baptizari, non debet?" ‡

3. The first Christians, being *Jews*, would naturally, without any direction to the contrary, consider *baptism*, which is the initiatory rite with respect to Christianity, as corresponding to *circumcision*, which bore the same relation to Judaism, § whether the correspondence was strictly just or not; and therefore they would naturally apply it to the same subjects, that is, to infants, as well as to grown persons. This analogy has struck some sects of Christians so

* *Wall's History of Infant Baptism*, I. p. 112. (P.) Ed. 3, p. 167.

† *De Ser. in Monte*, L. i. C. xxvii., *Opera*, II. p. 1121. "Even then there were Christian infants who were sanctified, (evidently meaning baptized,) some by the authority of one of the parents, and others with the consent of both." (P.) See *Wall*, (ed. 3,) I. p. 176; *Wakefield* and *Le Clerc*, quoted Vol. V. pp. 275, 276, *Note*.

‡ *De Verbis Apostoli*, (Serm. xiv.,) *Opera*, V. p. 327. (P.)

§ "There is this difference however," says Dr. Gale, "that infants were ordered to be circumcised under *Moses*; but were not ordered to be circumcised, that is, baptized, under Christ." He adds, "If any plain intimation could be found, that infants particularly are to be initiated now by baptism, as formerly they were by circumcision, the dispute would be at an end." *Reflections*, pp. 451, 452.

"The Apostle of the Gentiles," says *Wakefield*, "at the same time that he asserts in various passages of his epistles, the futility and the impropriety of *circumcision* under the Christian covenant, does not even hint at the substitution of *baptism* in its place." *Wakefield* adds, that the council (*Acts* xv.) "allowed the Gentiles a full dispensation from the practice of *circumcision*, and enjoined the observance of some particulars, among which *baptism* is not mentioned." See "A plain and short Account of the Nature of Baptism," 1781, p. 33.

forcibly, that they have generally baptized on the eighth day after the birth.* *Justin Martyr*, speaking of Christians, says, "We have not received the carnal but the spiritual circumcision by baptism;"† and in a treatise generally ascribed to him, he says, "We are circumcised by baptism with the circumcision of Christ."‡

These I call presumptive arguments, though I cannot help thinking them to be of great moment in the decision of this controversy. But I proceed to other arguments of a more direct and conclusive nature; though I am far from thinking them to be all of equal strength; and some of them may perhaps be deemed rather presumptive, than direct and positive.

SECTION II.

Arguments of a more direct Nature.

4. THERE being no absolute and universal rule with respect to the *time* of baptizing infants, some parents, in the early ages, as well as now, deferred it much longer than others. This custom *Tertullian* and *Gregory Nazianzen* preferred and recommended. But though they urge several arguments in favour of this practice, they never say that the contrary, or proper infant baptism, was a modern thing, or that it was not derived from the apostles; which they certainly would have done if they had thought it could have been alleged with truth; this being evidently the most powerful argument they could have produced. Their not doing it, therefore, is a proof that they knew it was not in their power. This is the more remarkable with respect to *Tertullian*, who, in writing against the heretics of his time, appeals to the sentiments of the churches that had been founded by the apostles, as the most decisive of all arguments; taking it for granted, that the doctrines and practices of such churches were derived from them, and therefore right. This is the whole scope of his reasoning in his treatise *De Præscriptione*. Would he not, then, have had recourse to the same argument in favour of adult baptism, in preference to that of infants, if he had thought that he could have done it with effect?

* See *Wall*, (ed. 3,) I. p. 81; *Gale*, pp. 452, 453; *Wall's Defence*, pp. 273, 274.

† *Dial.* p. 222. (P.) *Wall*, (ed. 3,) I. p. 18.

‡ *Ed. Colonia*, p. 45. (P.) *Wall*, (ed. 3,) I. p. 19. See *Gale*, pp. 443—451; *Wall's Defence*, pp. 267—273.

5. To the preceding arguments we may add, that in the time of *Tertullian* there were persons who had obtained the name of *sponsors*, who brought children to baptism, and made themselves responsible for their Christian instruction. Now this not being complained of, or said to be a novel institution, it was probably derived from the earliest times of Christianity. These sponsors were originally the parents of the children. Had these names and offices been unknown in the preceding age, and been introduced within the memory of any persons then living, there cannot be a doubt but that such an innovation would have been opposed, in that age, in which every other innovation, real or supposed, gave offence, was the occasion of a controversy, and frequently of the calling of councils. Besides, innovations in practices are more easily traced than innovations in opinions, which often produce no overt acts.

I would observe by the way, that how early soever was the superstitious notion of the use of baptism *to wash away sin*, (which was denied by *Chrysostom*,) the office of sponsors only implied the obligation they laid themselves under to give the children for whom they were sponsors a Christian education; and therefore that it was at some risk to themselves if they did not fulfil the obligation; as *Tertullian* says, “*Quid enim necesse est sponsores etiam periculo ingeri, quia et ipsi per mortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possunt, et proventu malæ indolis falli?*” *

6. Nothing is so likely to pass without particular notice by writers, as things that are universally known and practised by the persons for whose use their books were written. For this reason it is that we have a fuller account of *Roman* customs in the *Greek* than in the *Roman* authors, who wrote for the use of Romans, to whom their customs were as well known as to themselves. This accounts for nothing being said, except in a slight and indirect manner, by early Christian writers, of assembling for public worship on the Lord's day, or of the particular manner of administering Christian ordinances; these things being well known to those for whose use they wrote. We cannot, therefore, expect any express mention of infant baptism if it was the universal practice, and the propriety of it not disputed by any sect of Christians. Expressions, however, occur from which it

* *De Baptismo*, C. xviii. p. 231. “Why should the sponsors be brought into danger, since they may be disabled from fulfilling their promises either by their own death, or an untoward disposition in the children?” (*P.*) See *Wall*, (ed. 3.) 1. p. 45.

may be clearly inferred; and this circumstance furnishes the most satisfactory evidence of the universality of any custom.

Justin Martyr, speaking of some persons of both sexes then living, says "They had been disciples sixty or seventy years from their childhood."* This expression certainly implies, that when they were first entitled to the name of *disciples* they were not of full age, or their own masters, but at the disposal of their parents. And if they had been members of Christian churches sixty or seventy years, they must have been so ten, twenty, or thirty years before the death of the Apostle John. For *Justin* is said to have written in A. D. 140, and John died about a century after the commencement of the Christian æra.†

That *Irenæus* considered infants as proper members of Christian churches, and consequently entitled to baptism, is evident from the passage that I have quoted from him;‡ and *Origen*, in one of his works translated by *Ruffinus*, expressly speaks of the baptism of infants. Having mentioned the offerings for new-born children under the law, he says, "Pro hoc et ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem suscepit etiam parvulis baptismum dare."§ And there is no reason to suppose any perversion of his meaning by the translator, as there was not at that time any controversy on the subject, in the Christian church.

7. That infant baptism was generally practised in Africa in the time of *Tertullian* will not be denied. He thought it would be more rational to defer it till the children could give some account of their faith; but he did not say that the custom was an innovation; and it appears by the subsequent history of the African church, that his opinion was

* *Apol. i. ed. Thirlbii*, p. 22. (*P.*) *Wall*, (ed. 3.) I. p. 23.

† See *ibid.*; *Gale*, pp. 460—464; *Wall's Defence*, pp. 279, 280.

‡ *Supra*, p. 469.

§ *Epist. ad Romanos*, L. v. C. vi. *Opera* (ed. *Basilicæ*) II. p. 548. "For this reason the church received by tradition from the apostles, that baptism should be administered even to young children." (*P.*) *Wall*, (ed. 3.) I. p. 54. See *ibid.* p. 56.

Dr. *Gale* objects, "That these are not *Origen's* own words, but taken from a licentious *Latin* translation; while not the least colour of any thing can be urged from what remains of that father's in the *Greek*, and yet we have more of his in the *Greek* than of any father who wrote before him." He adds, "This is very remarkable, that what *Origen* says in favour of infant baptism, should be all in those *Latin* translations, and nothing of the same nature to be met with in such considerable remains in the *Greek*." *Reflections*, p. 519.

Of *Ruffinus's* translation, M. *Dailé* notes, "that you will hardly find a page where he has not retrenched, or added, or altered something. M. Du Pin several times repeats the same thing, and says—that it is a difficult matter to discern what is *Origen's* own, from what has been foisted in by the interpreter." *Ibid.* p. 522. See *Wall's Defence*, pp. 372—375.

not regarded; for, that baptism was not only administered at the age of eight days, in imitation of the time when the Jews circumcised their children;* but it was the general opinion of their bishops that it might be administered under that age.

One of their bishops named *Fidus* inquired of *Cyprian* (who was after *Tertullian*) whether a child might be baptized before it was eight days old; and on this a council was called, at which sixty-six bishops attended, when it was unanimously determined, “that it was not necessary to defer baptism till that time, for that the mercy of God should not be withheld from any one, as soon as it was born,”† it being taken for granted that a child could not derive any benefit from Christianity without it.

Now considering that this transaction was within one hundred and fifty years of the age of the apostles, had infant baptism not been practised by them, and from them transmitted to all Christian churches, some of those bishops, when the question came to be agitated, would have dissented from their brethren, and have maintained that baptizing even at the age of eight days was a departure from the apostolic practice; since they did not baptize any person who was not of an age to give an account of his faith. If no bishop in *Africa* had been able to give an account of the former practice of Christian churches, (though there were as learned Christians at that time in *Africa* as in any other part of the Christian world,) surely some bishop in some other province of the Roman empire would have censured their proceedings, if it had been thought that there was any ground for it. And as the intercourse between the bishops of *Africa* and those of the other provinces was uninterrupted, nothing could be transacted in the one that could be unknown, or unnoticed, in the other. The writings of *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Arnobius*, and *Austin*, who were all of *Africa*, were as well known, and as much read at *Rome*, and in the different provinces of the empire, as they were in *Africa* itself. To any person who is really acquainted with ecclesiastical history, and the state of things in this period of it, the argument in favour of the antiquity of infant baptism from the circumstances of this council, will appear to be little less than a demonstration.

* See *supra*, p. 470. (P.)

† *Cypriani Epistola*, lxiv. *Opera*, p. 158. (P.) “In hoc enim quod tu putabas esse faciendum nemo consensit: sed universi potius judicavimus nulli hominum nato misericordiam Dei et gratiam denegandam.” *Wall*, (ed. 3,) l. p. 74; *Gale*, pp. 528, 529.

8. The argument, however, from the history of the controversy between *Austin* and the *Pelagians* approaches something nearer to a demonstration, considering that the affairs of Christians had proceeded without any interruption from the earliest times to theirs; that both *Austin* and his opponents were men of learning, well acquainted, no doubt, with the history of the times before them, so that it was in their power to ascertain all ancient practices, and they were sufficiently interested to do it.

Two effects were by the early Christians ascribed to the rite of baptism; one was the forgiveness of sin, the washing with water being an emblem of cleansing; and the other was giving a title to eternal life, from its being denoted by the phrase *born again*, that is, to a new and better life. *Austin*, attending principally to the former of these effects of baptism, and acknowledging that infants had no sin of their own, advanced a new doctrine, viz. that though infants had no sin of their own, they derived sin from Adam; calling it *original sin*. This novelty (for such it certainly was) offended *Pelagius* and his followers, who did not deny the propriety of baptizing infants, but maintained that it was not, in their case, for the remission of sin, but merely a title to eternal life.

We have nothing to do with their peculiar opinions, or the arguments with which they supported them, but merely with their acknowledgment of the propriety of infant baptism, as derived to them from the age of the apostles. Now *Austin* expressly says, “Non quæstio est inter nos et ipsos utrum parvuli baptizandi sunt, sed de causa quæretur quare baptizandi sunt. Hoc ergo quod conceditur sine ulla cum illis dubitatione teneamus. Baptizandos esse parvulos nemo dubitet, quando nec illi qui ex parte aliqua contradicunt.”* And *Celestius* the friend of *Pelagius* owned that infants were to be baptized “according to the rule of the universal church.”† *Pelagius* himself said, “We hold one baptism which we say ought to be administered with the same sacramental words to infants as to older persons.”

Austin likewise, says, “he never heard not even of any impious heretics, who would say that baptism was not necessary to infants.” He farther says, that “all who receive

* *De Verbis Apostoli, Serm. xiii. Opera, X. p. 318.* “The question between us is not whether infants are to be baptized, but the reason *why* they are to be baptized. This, therefore, which is granted without any hesitation, let us hold, and let no person doubt that infants are to be baptized, since our opponents allow it.” (P.)

† *Wall's History of Infant Baptism, I. p. 273.* (P.)

the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, receive infant baptism for the remission of sin.”* “If any person,” he says, ask “for divine authority in this matter, though that which the whole church practises, and which has not been instituted by councils, but which was always in use, is very reasonably believed to be no other than a thing delivered by the authority of the apostles; yet we may, besides, make a true estimate how much the sacrament of baptism avails infants, by the circumcision which God’s former people received.”† Again, he says, “The custom of our mother the church in baptizing infants must not be disregarded, nor be accounted needless, nor believed to be other than a tradition of the apostles.”‡

Now as this was acknowledged both by *Pelagius* and his friend and companion *Celestius*, men of learning, and who had travelled much, (for *Pelagius* came from *Britain*, and *Celestius* it is thought from *Ireland*, and when the controversy broke out *Pelagius* was in *Palestine*, and *Celestius* in *Africa*,) § they must have been acquainted with the customs of many churches, and no doubt with those of all that were of much note; and they were certainly much interested in denying the universality of the practice, and its derivation from the apostles. For if they could have done *this*, and have shewn that the baptism of infants was an innovation, the whole of *Austin’s* argument in favour of original sin fell to the ground at once; for a practice that was of no authority, would not prove any thing. And the argument of *Austin* in proof of his doctrine of original sin depended entirely upon the acknowledged practice and propriety of infant baptism.

This, I say again, appears to me to amount as near to a demonstration of the universality of the practice of infant baptism, and of its having been derived from the times of the apostles, as any thing can well be.

We may judge how much the *Pelagians* were interested to deny the authority of infant baptism by its being maintained by Mr. Robinson that they did deny it. But I have not in all my reading met with any assertion so totally void of foundation as this. I do not wish to charge any writer with knowingly asserting a falsehood, and intending to impose

* *Wall’s History of Infant Baptism*, p. 92. (P.) † *Ibid.* p. 180. (P.)

‡ *De Genesi ad Literam*, L. x. Sect. xxii., *Opera*, III. p. 654. (P.) “Consuetudo tamen matris ecclesie in baptizandis parvulis nequaquam spernenda est, neque ullo modo superflua deputanda, nec omnino credenda nisi apostolica esse traditio.” *Wall*, l. (ed. 3), p. 218.

§ See Vol. VIII. pp. 521—527.

upon his readers, for the sake of supporting an argument ; but the conduct of Mr. Robinson in this case can hardly be accounted for on any other principle.

“Austin,” he says, “and his company—ventured to place it” (infant baptism) “on universal custom,”* as if it had been a bold falsehood that they had advanced.† “The most likely opinion, he says, “is, that Pelagius did deny the baptism, but not the salvation of infants ;”‡ and with respect to what I have quoted, from *Austin*, viz. of the propriety of the custom being acknowledged by *Pelagius*, he says, “Had he forgot himself when he taxed the Pelagians with denying infant baptism, and when he complained in another book, of people who opposed it?”§ referring in the margin, though without citing the words of Austin, to two passages of his writings, viz. *De Peccatorum Meritis*, Lib. ii. Cap. xxv., and *De Libero Arbitrio*, Lib. iii. Cap. xxiii. Now I have carefully perused both these passages, and do not find in either of them the least pretence for his assertions. *Austin* never contradicted himself on the subject. He always said, and does not appear to have been contradicted by the *Pelagians*, that they acknowledged the universality and the

* *Hist. of Baptism*, p. 218. (P.) The whole passage is as follows: “Austin and his company were the first who ventured to attack at law believers’ baptism. They went therefore on the forlorn hope, and a plain tale puts them down. They did not pretend to ground infant baptism on scripture, but tradition, and as they could not possibly cite a law human or divine, they ventured to place it on universal custom. Had custom been for it, and reason against it, reason should have taken place of custom: but with what possible decency could Austin dare to affirm this?” *Ibid.*

† “Some, who have no very favourable opinion of either the sincerity or modesty of the man,” continues Robinson, “are so shocked at this affirmation, that they suspect his works have been interpolated and think he could not say so. Yes, he is allowed by those who have most studied his books to have constantly affirmed this.” Quoting in a note “*Petavii Opera*, Tom. III. *Antwerpæ*, 1700 ; *De Eccl. Hierarch.* L. i. C. i. p. 6 ; August. *Op. De Peccator. merit.* L. i. C. xxiv. ; Was he himself then,” proceeds Robinson, “baptized in his infancy ? Was Ambrose, who baptized him, baptized in infancy ? Was his own natural son baptized when he was an infant ? Was his father Patricius baptized when an infant ? Had he, who pretended he had been a Manichean, never heard that they did not baptize infants ? Had all other heretics escaped his notice ?” *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* p. 210. (P.) The whole passage is as follows, speaking of Pelagius : “It was generally reported, that he disallowed of the baptism of infants, which Austin had been labouring to establish.” For this Robinson, quotes “*Innocent Papa l. Vita ; S. Bini Notæ in Vit. Innoc.*,” and thus proceeds : “He [*Pelagius*] complained they defamed him. ‘No,’ replies Austin, ‘if you deny original sin and grace, for the sake of which baptism is administered, you deny in effect, both the baptism and salvation of infants.’ The most likely opinion is, that Pelagius did deny the baptism, but not the salvation of infants.” *Ibid.*

There is certainly an inconsistency in this passage, for, “if Pelagius did deny the baptism of infants,” how was it that “he complained they defamed him” who “reported that he disallowed of the baptism of infants” ?

§ *Ibid.* p. 218. (P.) Robinson immediately adds, “If it were an established, universal custom, for whose use was the law made to compel it ?” *Ibid.*

propriety of infant baptism, differing from him only with respect to the reason of the practice, and what might be inferred from it.

With the same confident boldness, and on as little authority, he says, that the baptism of infants was merely an African custom, but that "it should seem" to have been "first practised by a small obscure sect of Gnostics, called Cainites, Caianites, or Gaianites." He says, however, "It is impossible to say any thing certain on the baptism of children among the Gnostics, when and where it originated, whether it was only proposed, or really practised, how far it extended, and by what means, or at what moment, it found its way into the Catholic church: but there is no hazard in affirming, that toward the close of the 4th century it was first brought into public by Gregory Nazianzen; that it became agreeable to the clergy, as a relief from the inconveniences of the catechumen-state; that it was the standing mode of baptizing for many centuries in both the Greek and Roman Catholic churches; and that it became popular only in proportion as fraud beguiled, or as civil power forced, the reluctant laity to yield to it." *

Thus may any man write who pays no regard to truth or probability.† Here a solemn practice is said to have originated in the most enlightened age of the primitive church, an age the most abounding in writers, when nothing new was started without being controverted (for the numerous writings of that age are chiefly controversial), and to have become presently universal, nay instantly so (for *Gregory Nazianzen* was in part contemporary with *Austin*) without any objection or controversy at all. The laity are deceived, or compelled, to compliance, without leaving any trace of a complaint on the subject. And finally the whole Catholic church borrow an universal practice from an obscure set of *Gnostics*; when every branch of them are known to have been held in the greatest abhorrence by all the Catholics.

Besides, it is well known that the only sect of Christians who rejected baptism and the eucharist were some of the *Gnostics*. It was the leading principle of those philosophising Christians, that *matter* owes its origin and formation to an evil being. They, therefore, wished to disengage the spiritual part of man from any connexion with it. This led them to reject the doctrine of a resurrection, and to maintain

* *Hist. of Baptism*, pp. 247—249. (P.)

† *Robinson*, however, adduces "*BASILII Orat. Exhort. ad baptis.*" as an authority, and quotes "*GREG. NAZIANZ. Orat. xl.*" in the original. See *Hist.* pp. 249, 250.

that the soul, once delivered from the bondage of flesh, would never be united to it again, but go immediately to heaven. And on the same principle they might deny the use of any *material elements* for spiritual purposes, as of bread and wine in the eucharist, and water in baptism; and as the *Quakers* do now, they might say, that what is delivered concerning those rites in the *New Testament* is to be understood in a spiritual, or mystical sense. But none of the ancient sects of Christians denied infant baptism only, so as to confine baptism to adults. If they objected to baptism, as some did, it was to baptism with water universally, that of adults, as well as that of infants.

Mr. Robinson says, that “the Manicheans—did not baptize infants.” But it is proved by *Beausobre*, who took more pains than any other person to investigate the history, the opinions, and the practices, of the *Manicheans*, that they did baptize infants.* He says, that “their affection for the system of the Magians would incline them to it, since these also baptized; both presenting children to the sun, and to fire; and also plunging them into a large vessel of water.”†

9. The practice of infant baptism in churches very remote from each other, and unquestionably of great antiquity, cannot be accounted for, but on the supposition of this having been the general, if not the universal, practice, when those churches were founded.

The *Donatists*‡ baptized infants as well as the *Catholics* in Africa,§ and certainly would not borrow it from them, and the *Donatists* were prior to *Constantine*. Infant baptism, as well as infant communion, is the practice of the Greek church;|| and the *Greeks* would not adopt any thing from the *Latins*. The *Waldenses* also baptized infants, and said that their ancestors never practised otherwise.¶

Infant baptism is practised by the Christians of St. Thomas

* *Hist. of Baptism*, p. 496. (P.) Robinson, whom Dr. Priestley has, I think, on this subject, allowed himself too hastily to censure, here quoted *Mosheim*, (“*De Rebus Christianorum ante Constantin. Mag. Comment. Helmstadii, 1753, Sæc. iii. L. i.*”) where he says, “*Hæc manifesta et supra omnem dubitationem posita erunt si docuero. 1. Infantes apud Manichæos non fuisse per baptismum in ecclesiam receptos,*” &c. See *Hist.* p. 496.

Lardner, on the contrary, says, “they practised infant baptism;” and sustains his opinion by questions “from Faustus, and Mani himself.” *Works*, III. p. 490.

† *Histoire de Manichéisme et du Manichéisme*, 1739. II. p. 719. (P.) “*Maniché se conformoit en cela à la pratique des Mages, dont il ne s’éloignoit que le moins qu’il lui étoit possible. C’étoit le moyen de leur faire goûter sa Religion. Les anciens Persans portoient leurs Enfants au Temple, peu de jours après qu’ils étoient nez, et les présentoient au prêtre devant le soleil, et devant le feu, qui en étoit le symbole.*” *Ibid.*

‡ Vol. VIII. pp. 259—261.

§ See *Wall*, (ed. 3.) I. pp. 182—192.

|| See Vol. II. p. 338, *Note*; V. p. 238, *Note*; *Wall*, (ed. 3.) II. pp. 258, 259.

¶ *Wall’s History of Infant Baptism*, I. p. 162. (P.) Ed. 3. II. pp. 227—245.

in the East, and though they are said to be *Nestorians*, they were, no doubt, prior to *Nestorius*. It is, however, the practice of all the professed Nestorians, as well as of their opponents the *Eutychians* or *Jacobites*, wherever situated, as of the *Armenians*, *Copts*, and *Abyssinians*.

The Christians of *Abyssinia* are probably as ancient as the time of *Candace*, queen of Ethiopia, whose eunuch was converted by Philip. But the lowest opinion concerning the origin of Christianity in Abyssinia is the time of *Athanasius*, who was prior to the Council of *Chalcedon*, or any mention of *Nestorianism* or *Eutychianism*. And since the Abyssinians have not much learning, it is probable that their opinions and customs are the same that they were in the earliest times. Their custom is to baptize forty days after the birth. *La Croze* thinks that the Abyssinians received Christianity from the old *Nazarenes*, who were Jews. Hence he thinks they had the rite of circumcision. All their customs, he says, point to this origin, and no other.*

The *Mingrelians* and *Georgians*, who retain little more than the name of Christians, † baptize, according to *Chardin*, at a very early age, ‡ at least before the children are able to answer for themselves, though they generally defer the ceremony till they can afford to make an entertainment on the occasion. § The *Maronites* also baptize infants. ||

* *Histoire du Christianisme d'Ethiopé*, 1739, p. 79. (P.) "Je crois que les Abissins, qui, comme tous les Savans en conviennent, ont passé d'Arabie en Afrique, ont reçu leur Religion des Chrétiens Nazaréens, dont peut-être même ils sont les descendans. En effet, toutes leurs coutumes se rapportent-là et ne paroissent pas susceptibles d'une autre origine." *Ibid*.

+ "Sir John Chardin says, (p. 85,) I could never discover any religion in any *Mengrelian*: Having not found any that know what religion, or law, or sin, or a sacrament, or divine service, is." This, *Chardin* adds, "is no less true of the people of Georgia," *Wall*, (ed. 3,) II. pp. 263, 265.

† *Chardin* says, "They anoint infants as soon as they are born, on the forehead.—The oil for this anointing is called *myrone*. The baptism is not administered till a long time after." *Ibid*. p. 264.

§ *Wall's History of Infant Baptism*, II. p. 125. (P.) "Hence," *Chardin* adds, "it comes to pass that many infants die without receiving baptism." *Ed*. 3, II. p. 264. "There is not one priest among them that understands the *form of baptism*: so their baptism is utterly invalid. On this regard the *fathers of the Theatines* baptize as many infants as they can. They give them baptism under pretence of applying some medicine, &c.—A priest that is called to see a sick child, calls for a bason of water, as it were to wash his hands: then before his hands be dry, he touches the forehead of the child with a wet finger, as if he observed something concerning his distemper; or by shaking his hand causes some drops of water to fly in the face of a child that stands by, as it were in sport: saying the form of baptism either mentally, or with a muttering voice.—Sir John was invited to two christenings there. The priest read, but talked at the same time, to those that came in and out. The people went irreverently to and fro in the room: and so did the boy that was to be baptized, chewing a piece of pig the while. He was, he says, a little boy of five years old." *Ibid*. pp. 264, 265.

|| Who, according to *Ross*, "receive the Eucharist as soon as baptized." *View of all Religions*, (ed. 6,) 1696, p. 319.

Mr. Robinson says, "At what time the baptism of little children began to be tolerated in the Nestorian church is uncertain: the most likely opinion is, that it was introduced in the seventh century, by the patriarch Jesujabus III., who was a monk of great address, and who raised himself to the patriarchate by a singular effort." He adds, "It may very fairly be doubted whether the baptism of natural infants be practised by any Nestorians, except a few whom the missionaries have latinized.—They are constantly censured for delaying to baptize their children till they are three, four, six, eight, ten, or eighteen years of age." *

Thus writes Mr. Robinson, without mentioning a single circumstance to make his bold conjecture so much as probable. For any thing that is certainly known, infant baptism might with as much probability be said to have been introduced among these *Nestorians* by any other person as this *Jesujabus*. † And what Mr. Robinson says is *probable*, is contrary to all ecclesiastical history. If the Catholic missionaries may be credited, they found infant baptism practised by the *Nestorians* when they arrived among them; and they appear to have practised it time immemorial. As to some of them deferring baptism till the age that Mr. Robinson mentions, it was evidently from neglect, and not from principle. He might with equal reason maintain that the majority of the people of *England*, and of *America* too, are no Christians, or that they deny the obligation and use of the Lord's supper, because they never attend upon that Christian ordinance. But who does not see the inconclusiveness of that inference from the fact?

Simon says, that "there were many of them, chiefly the poor, who lived in the woods, and who had never been baptized, because it took money; yet they went to church and received the communion. Besides, they often enough delayed baptism for several months, and even years." ‡ Has this the appearance of any fixed principle, or allowed practice? This writer adds, that, "according to the ancient practice of the eastern church, the Nestorians administered

* *Hist. of Baptism*, p. 487. (P.) "Ils different le baptême des enfans jusqu'à trois, quatre, cinq, six, dix et dixhuit ans;" quoted from "Le Sieur de Moni, (P. Simon,) *Hist. Critiq. de la Créance et des Coutumes des Nations de Levant*. *Franckf.* 1684, p. 5." *Ibid.*

† This charge against *Robinson* appears to be unfounded. He quotes *Ehedjesu*, (in *Asseman*, Tom. III. Pt. i. p. 139,) who says "Jesujabus, Adjabenus—Nestorianis præfuit ab anno Christi 650, ad annum 660." Then immediately follows (from *Ordo Baptismi Chaldæor.* Tom. I. p. 584) "Ordinavit totum circulis et baptismum, id est, ritum administrandi hoc sacramentum." *Hist. of Baptism*, p. 487, Note 9.

‡ *History of the Religions of the Eastern Nations*, p. 94. (P.)

to children confirmation, and the eucharist, together with baptism." *

That the *Nestorians* deferred baptism so many years as Mr. Robinson says, is constantly objected to them: it is only the charge of a single person, who was interested in representing their opinions and practices as absurd as possible. *Simon*, after enumerating sixteen articles in which they were said to differ from the Church of Rome, says, "These are a part of the errors Archbishop Menezes pretended to have found among the Christians of St. Thomas, which the compiler of that history exaggerates, to shew that extraordinary labour was necessary to gain these people." † Is it not evident too from this, that these errors and abuses, real or pretended, existed among these Christians before the arrival of the missionaries among them, and were not, as Mr. Robinson thought probable, introduced by them?

SECTION III.

Objections to the preceding Arguments.

1. To these reasons for the general practice of infant baptism by Christian parents, I do not find more than one objection grounded on a *fact*, and that is the case of *Gregory Nazianzen*, who was not baptized till he was of adult age, though his father was a Christian and a bishop. ‡ But not to observe that no general conclusion can be drawn from the opinion or practice of a single person, since it might be peculiar to himself, the father of *Gregory* was a Heathen till after he was married, as were his parents before him, § though he was ordained priest soon after his marriage; and it depends, Mr. Wall says, upon an obscure point of chronology whether he was born before his father's baptism or not. || If he was born before his father's baptism he certainly would not be baptized till afterwards. Or, if he was born after his father's baptism, it might be his particular opinion, as it was that of his son, that it was more adviseable to defer it till the child was of reasonable age, except in case of sickness with danger of

* *History of the Religions of the Eastern Nations*, p. 101. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 97. (P.)

‡ A few other similar cases are alleged by the *Antipædobaptists*, but they are all considered, and I think satisfactorily accounted for, by Mr. Wall. (P.) See *Wall*, (ed. 3.) II. pp. 44—70.

§ *Wall's History of Infant Baptism*, II. pp. 20, 53. (P.) *Ed.* 3, II. pp. 70—82. See *Gale*, pp. 29, 30; *Wall's Defence*, pp. 65, 66.

|| *Hist.* II. p. 34. (P.) *Ed.* 3, pp. 72—74.

death, when baptism was never denied; and he might be a healthy child. *Gregory* himself advises to defer baptism, but he makes an express exception in case of danger of death, which sufficiently shews that he saw no impropriety in baptizing at any age, though he thought a particular one generally preferable.

2. It is alleged that as baptism was regularly administered only at *Easter*, or some other public festival, when there was an office, now extant, evidently adapted to persons of ripe age, or boys and girls of competent understanding, so as to be capable of answering the questions that were put to them, the baptism of infants was necessarily excluded. But this could not be the case while it was acknowledged that infants in danger of death might be baptized. Thus, though at the synod at *Gerunda* in the sixth century, it was ordered that catechumens should be baptized only at *Easter* or *Pentecost*, an exception was made in the case of sickness, "when" it is added, "baptism ought never to be denied at any time whatsoever."*

In the early ages there would always be many proper subjects of baptism, of persons regularly instructed, who had passed through the order of catechumens previous to the ceremony; and for them, and also for their children of riper age, the office was of course adapted. Besides, in those times many Christians deferred their own baptism from the idea that, since it washed away all sin, they might by that means die in a purer state than they otherwise could do. Thus *Constantine*, though a zealous Christian, was not baptized till he apprehended he was near dying.† Such persons as these would naturally defer the baptism of their children that were not in danger of death; and on that principle, as well as for the reasons urged by *Tertullian* and *Gregory Nazianzen*, there might always be subjects enow for adult baptism; and the ceremony being operose, the clergy would naturally wish to have it performed at a stated time, when the same service would suffice for a great number. And they might prefer *Easter* for this purpose, as it was the time of our Lord's death and resurrection, of which baptism was considered as an emblem, and the greatest festival in the church; and perhaps also because it was said that the Jews received their proselytes at the time of their passover.‡

* *Du Pin's History of Ecclesiastical Writers*, V. p. 115. (P.)

‡ See Vol. VIII. pp. 319, 320.

† *Wall's History of Infant Baptism*, I. p. 23. (P.)

In process of time, however, when the profession of Christianity was become universal, when there were no Jews or Heathens to baptize, and the practice of deferring baptism was exploded, so that every Christian parent had been baptized, the custom of administering baptism only at *Easter*, or some other public festival, would naturally cease, and the office adapted to that solemnity would grow into disuse; all the children of Christian parents having been baptized early, and of course separately, as at present.

3. To the practice of proper infant baptism, or the baptism of *babes*, by the early Christians, Mr. Robinson objects the vague use of the term *infants*, shewing that in many cases it was used to signify persons full grown.* This is acknowledged, but the objection has no weight whatever in this case; because the infants admitted to baptism are described in such a manner as shews that whatever their age really was, they were not capable of thinking and acting for themselves, and therefore required sponsors.

This was clearly the case of those to whose baptism *Tertullian* objected. They are called *innocents*, being too young to have contracted any guilt of their own. *Austin* says, "Quid offendet parvulus non baptizatus, nullam habens culpam?"† It was on this account that he maintained that though they had no sin of their own, they were defiled with that of Adam. He also opposes *infantes* to *credentes*. "Utique prodest Christus parvulis baptizatis. Prodest ergo non credentibus."‡

Besides, where infant baptism is the universal practice, there are various customs in different places with respect to the usual time of administering it. This at least is the case in England, both with respect to the members of the Church of England and Dissenters. With some it is the custom to baptize very early, almost as soon as the mother can attend the service; but in other places it is generally deferred till the child be at least a year old. Nay sometimes the parents will wait till they have two or three to be baptized at the same time, perhaps on account of the expense of the entertainment which it is customary to make on the occasion. I once saw a woman belonging to the Church of England carrying one child in her arms, while she held another by the

* *Hist. of Baptism*, pp. 171—182.

† *Opera*, X. p. 319. (P.)

‡ *De Baptismo Parvulorum contra Pelagianos*, Sect. xiv. *Opera*, X. p. 326. "Wherefore Christ is of advantage to infants that are baptized, and consequently to such as are not believers." (P.)

hand, and a third followed at some distance, as they went to the church to be baptized; nor was this thought very extraordinary in that place.

4. Much stress is always laid on our Lord's saying, (*Matt.* xxviii. 19,) "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c., as if instruction must always precede baptism. But this general direction was very proper at that time, the great bulk of those to whom the apostles were to preach being *Jews* or *Heathens*, who must of course be converted, and instructed, before they would be baptized themselves, or suffer their children to be baptized. Such would naturally be the direction of a Jewish rabbi with respect to circumcision. He would say to his missionaries, "Go, convert, and circumcise all men," though he knew that his religion directed the circumcision of children when they were only eight days old, and therefore incapable of receiving instruction.

It is remarkable, however, that *Justin Martyr* applies the very same word that is used by our Lord, viz. that of *discipling* (for so it ought to be rendered) to children; saying, that "there were children, as well as persons of adult age, who had been made disciples to Christ."*

5. It is commonly said, that it was only the superstitious notion of the absolute necessity of baptism to the forgiveness of sin and future happiness that introduced the practice of infant baptism. It is acknowledged that enough of superstition crept into this ordinance, as well as into that of the Lord's supper; and this was, no doubt, the reason for baptizing children in danger of death. But this superstition was in some measure at least counteracted by another, viz. that the later baptism was deferred, the safer persons would die; and this would favour the practice of adult baptism as much, perhaps, as the other would that of infants.

SECTION IV.

Of the Origin of Antipædobaptism.

It is not a little remarkable that the sect of *Antipædobaptists* which is now so considerable, and on several accounts so highly respectable, should have had so late, and if I may be allowed any term approaching to a censure, I would add, so unworthy, an origin. For it cannot be traced higher

* *Apol. I. ed. Thirlby*, p. 22. (P.)

than the *Petrobrussians* in the 12th century. * In more ancient times no example can be produced of any person who admitted adult baptism, and excluded infants. If they rejected baptism at all, they did it universally; and this was done only by some obscure *Gnostics*, and no doubt arose from their improper ideas concerning *matter*, together with their dislike of the ceremonial law of Moses; extending that dislike to every thing of a similar nature in Christianity. And it has been clearly shewn, that many of those who made a stand against the corruption of the church and court of Rome in the south of France, and the north of Italy, entertained some *Manichean* principles, having derived them from the *Priscillianists* in the West, and the *Paulicians* in the East. For, many of these last, being persecuted by the emperors at Constantinople, fled into those parts.

Peter, the respectable abbot of *Clugni*, writing against *Peter de Bruis*, and his disciple Henry, in A. D. 1126, charges them with denying infant baptism, and says that the sect was of twenty years' standing. † *Alanus*, "at the year 1192, reckoning up the opinions of the *Cathari*" in Italy, says, "some of them held baptism of no use to infants: others of them to no person at all." ‡

The *Lyonists* in the south of France held, § "that the devil made this world and all things in it: that all the sacraments of the church," as that "of baptism with material water,—profit nothing to salvation;" and || "that Christ did not take on him human nature of the blessed Virgin, but took on him a body that was from heaven." ¶

"One *Everrinus*, of the diocese of Cologne," ** writes to St. *Bernard*—"an account of two sorts of heretics lately discovered in that country," one of whom, he said, denied infant baptism, but not that of adults. †† It was with a view to this opinion that *Innocent III.*, in the *Lateran* Council in A. D. 1215, decreed, that "the sacrament of

* *Wall's History of Infant Baptism*, II. pp. 172, 174. (P.) *Ed. 3*, pp. 234—236. See Vol. IX. p. 350.

† *Wall*, II. p. 172. (P.) *Ed. 3*, pp. 234, 237. See Vol. IX. p. 350.

‡ *Wall*, II. p. 177. (P.) *Ed. 3*, p. 240. See Vol. IX. pp. 347, 348.

§ According to *Reinerius* in his "*Lib. adv. Waldenses*, C. vi. *Colom.* 1618." As to this author "in the case of the *Lyonists*," Dr. *Wall* says, "these had gained such a repute by the innocence of their lives and the soundness of their faith, that they did more hurt to the Church of Rome than all the rest: therefore he does, as any one will perceive, endeavour to blacken their opinions in the recital." *Hist. (ed. 3)* II. p. 230. See Vol. IX. p. 349.

|| "Of one sect of the *Cathari*," *Reinerius* says. *Wall*, (ed. 3,) II. p. 231.

¶ *Wall*, II. p. 170. (P.) *Ed. 3*, p. 230.

** "A little before the year 1140." *Wall*.

†† *Wall*, (ed. 3,) II. p. 234.

baptism performed in water with invocation of the Trinity, is profitable to salvation, both to *adult persons* and also to *infants*, by whomsoever it is rightly administered, in the form of the church.”*

The sect of *Antipædobaptists* was revived by Nicholas Storck † and Thomas Muncer, ‡ in the time of Lutker; and though it is not easy to trace any connexion between these Antipædobaptists and those of a former period in France and Italy; that connexion is not improbable: since many of the *Anabaptists* in Munster held the opinion of Christ not having derived his flesh from the Virgin, but that of its being a new creation in her womb. This too was the opinion of *Menno* the great reformer of the Anabaptists, § and it is also said to be held by some of the Anabaptists in England. || It was the opinion of Joan Bocher of Kent, who suffered Martyrdom in the reign of Edward VI. She could not reconcile the spotless purity of Christ’s human nature with his receiving flesh from a sinful creature. ¶ *Mosheim* says, the English *General Baptists* “consider it as a matter of indifference whether that sacrament (*baptism*) be administered in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or in that of *Christ alone*.”** But many of the *Anabaptists* were at that time *Unitarians*.

The unquestionable piety of the *Petrobrussians*, the *Cathari*, the *Lyonists*, and the *Anabaptists* of Germany, who held opinions evidently derived from *Gnosticism*, may incline us to think that the ancient *Gnostics* were a better class of Christians than their contemporaries of the *Catholics* would allow them to be, though some of them no doubt deserved the character that is given of them by the apostles and subsequent writers. The candid *Lardner* did not think ill of the *Manicheans* as a body.†† But notwithstanding this,

* *Wall’s History of Infant Baptism*, II. p. 178. (P.) *Ed.* 3, p. 242.

† See Vol. X. p. 138; *Brandt*, 1749, pp. 187, 188; *La Roche*, 1725, pp. 38, 39.

‡ See Vol. X. pp. 138, 157, 158, 193; *Brandt*, p. 189; *La Roche*, p. 40.

§ “Thomas Muntzer” is placed first among his portraits of *heretics*, by *Alexander Ross*, who prefers against him this accusation, that “he brought *baptism* into contempt, most inconvincibly affirming, that there was no warrant for God for *Pædobaptism*, or baptism of children.” *View of all Religions*, (ed 6,) 1696, p. 398.

¶ *Mosheim’s Eccles. Hist.*, IV. p. 156. (P.) Cent. xvi. Sect. iii. Pt. ii. Ch. iii. xviii. *Mosheim* adds in his note, “It must, however, be acknowledged, that *Menno*—expresses himself ambiguously on this head.”

|| *Ibid.* p. 163. (P.) Ch. xxiii.

¶ *Dr. Toulmin’s Note to Neal’s History of the Puritans*, I. p. 55. (P.) See Vol. X. pp. 242, 243.

** *Eccles. Hist.* IV. (Sect. xxiii.) p. 163.

†† *Works*, III. pp. 498—411. “Augustine himself seems to have acquitted them. Whilst he was among them he lived a sensual course of life, and his head was filled with ambitious schemes: but he owns that this was not owing to their doctrine: for they earnestly exhorted men, he says to mind better things.” *Ibid.* p. 410.

the late origin of the doctrine of the *Antipædobaptists*, and its derivation from *Gnosticism*, now universally exploded, must furnish a reasonable and very strong objection to it in the minds of rational Christians.

SECTION V.

On Dipping or Sprinkling, and of the Obligation of the Rite of Baptism itself.

On the mode of applying water in the rite of baptism I shall not say much. But as the use of water is only *emblematical*, and as *washing*, or *sprinkling*, may answer that purpose as well as *dipping*, I have little doubt but that, if the apostles themselves had lived in a climate in which bathing the whole body had been very inconvenient, or unpleasant, they would not have adopted it. To denote *purity*, as well as to give an example of humility, our Lord washed the apostles' feet, and on his saying to *Peter*, who would have declined it, that if he did not wash him he had no part in him, and *Peter* then replying, "not my feet only, but also my hands and my head," Jesus said, (*John* xiii. 10,) "He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet." And as a mere *emblem*, this was quite sufficient for the purpose.

Also the writer of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* uses the phrase *sprinkling* as well as *washing*, when he had to express the idea of moral purity. *Heb.* x. 22: "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies *bathed in pure water.*"

That the Christians in ancient times thought that dipping was not absolutely necessary to the validity of baptism, though they thought a valid baptism necessary to salvation, appears from their being content to sprinkle those that were sick in bed, without dipping them afterwards. They who only sprinkled a sick person would probably, on the same principle, have been content with sprinkling, or washing, those who were not sick, in a cold climate.

Cyprian in his epistle to *Magnus*, who inquired of him whether they who had only been sprinkled in baptism were as complete Christians as they who had been dipped, answers without hesitation in the affirmative; and after quoting *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25, in which mention is made of *sprinkling with water* as an emblem of moral purity, and some cases in the ceremonial law, in which sprinkling was sufficient for

purification, says, “*Spiritus Sanctus non demensura datur, sed super credentem totus infunditur.*”*

It is acknowledged, that in Palestine and other warm climates, baptism was administered by dipping; though the case is not quite so clear when great numbers were baptized by John, if it was necessary (as I believe the Baptists think, and it is their practice at present) for the baptizer to go into the water along with the person baptized. For the baptist must then have continued all day long, or a very inconvenient time, in the water. Though it may be said that *he* baptized, if they who had been baptized by him performed the ceremony. It is also more probable that Philip and the eunuch found a well of water in the desert they went through, rather than a river, or a lake deep enough for them to bathe in, and the words that we render *going into the water*, and *coming out of it*, may be rendered *going to the water*, and *coming from it*.

2. As the rite of baptism itself is only emblematical, and merely a particular form in which a person declares himself to be a Christian, and of course takes upon himself the obligations that Christianity lays him under, it was much more necessary when a Heathen or a Jew was converted, and when there were in the same country many who continued Heathens or Jews, from whom the new converts were to be distinguished, than it is at this day, in countries in which all the inhabitants make profession of Christianity; especially since the regular attendance on public worship, and joining in the celebration of the Lord's supper, are a sufficient declaration of the same thing; shewing that men are Christians, and wish to be considered as such.

In this case, though it was the direction of Christ himself, addressed to the apostles, to baptize all nations, and the apostles unquestionably conformed to that direction; yet if the abuses of the institution should come to exceed the uses of it, many persons say they see no great evil to arise from laying it aside altogether. This, some may think the apostles themselves would have done, if they had lived to see the excessive and almost incurable nature of the abuses that have actually been introduced into it.

Since, however, the baptism of adults, and also that of children, affords a favourable opportunity of explaining the nature of the Christian profession, and of urging the motives to live as becomes that profession, I think it more advise-

* *Opera*, II. p. 187. “The Holy Spirit is not given in part, but entire, to every believer.” (*P.*)

able to administer baptism in the original, simple manner, in which all the abuses of the institution may be pointed out and guarded against, than to lay it aside. More especially, let it be expressed to be a rite in which the child bears no part, or by which it can be directly benefited; but merely as a badge of the profession of Christianity in the parent, or sponsor, a form of taking upon himself the obligation of educating the child as a Christian should do; and by no means let any child be baptized that is in danger of death.

That what a person does to others should only concern himself, we see in several circumstances recorded in the Scriptures. Thus when Abraham was circumcised, he was directed to circumcise not only his son, but even all the slaves in his family, though they were no way interested in the thing that was signified by the rite. And when the Ninevites expressed their repentance, they made their cattle to fast as well as themselves. *Jonah* iii. 7.

At the same time, candour requires us to observe, that since the great object of Christianity is purity of heart and life; if this end be really attained by those who, for insufficient reasons, omit what we take to be even an useful *means*, and much more what is merely an *emblem* of it, we should not condemn either the Quakers, who reject both baptism and the Lord's supper, or those Christians who, judging baptism to be now unnecessary, do not choose to have their children baptized. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

There is, I think, sufficient evidence that the *Jews* baptized, as well as circumcised their proselytes; but that they did not baptize, though they circumcised the children of proselytes, any more than their own. The stock being holy, the branches were deemed to be holy too; and on this principle some Christians think that the baptizing of the children of parents who are Christians is unnecessary. But I do not find any trace of the primitive Christians thinking in this manner. They certainly had their children baptized, though they had been baptized themselves.

Thus, my friend, I have laid before you the principal *facts* and *arguments* that weigh with me in favour of infant baptism; and I cannot help thinking that when you give due attention to them, they will make some impression on your mind. I also hope that they will contribute something towards the great Christian virtue of mutual candour.

The greatest allowance ought to be made for the original adoption of your present sentiments and practice by the *Petrobrussians*, as it was in a very dark age, when the abuses of Christian ordinances were gross, and the tracing of the origin and progress of them was exceedingly difficult, and to most persons absolutely impossible: so that it was natural to reject altogether what they saw to answer no purposes but those of superstition and priestcraft, and to adhere to what appeared to them to be rational and useful, especially when they found nothing in the Scriptures decisively against it.

Now, the direction of our Lord to *proselyte*, which implied *instruction*, and of course a capacity for it, before *baptizing* persons of all nations, was certainly consonant to reason; and there is not in the *New Testament* any clear example of the baptizing of any infant. And we neither can nor ought to be willing to deny that all the real uses of Christianity, in correcting the vices and improving the characters of men, may be obtained without any such ordinance as that of baptism, and especially without the administration of it in infancy. It would, therefore, appear more safe and more rational to reject it rather than practise it as it was then done, viz. as a mere charm, operating without any sense or knowledge in the subject to which it was applied. These are the arguments on which you rest your cause at this day, and by their great plausibility you are certainly making converts.

But had the *Petrobrussians* been learned, that is, in antiquity, which they were not, they would, I doubt not, have proceeded and acted differently. They would have rectified the abuse without rejecting the ordinance that was abused. And as the ancient *Antipædobaptists* were not learned, that is, not acquainted with Christian antiquity, or the doctrines and practices of primitive times, so you must, my friend, excuse me, if I add that, in my opinion, few of the modern ones have been so.

The *Polish Socinians*, who were, at least generally, *Antipædobaptists*, were men of extraordinary good sense, and well acquainted with the Scriptures, beyond any of their contemporary reformers; but they did not study the *fathers*. They rather seem to have despised them. But it is only from the writings of any particular age that we can acquire a knowledge of what was thought and done in that age. And though this kind of learning is now more easy and common, by means of the many editions of the Christian

fathers, prejudice in favour of particular opinions and practices has taken such deep root, that it cannot be expected to give way very soon to the light reflected from it.

This we see with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity. There have been more learned *Trinitarians* than *Unitarians*; and yet I think I have shewn that from the *fathers* themselves may be collected the most decisive evidence, that the great body of Christians in the age immediately following that of the apostles were *Unitarians*;* and a great majority of Christians in all countries are *Trinitarians* still, notwithstanding the most abundant evidence of the truth of Unitarianism from the Scriptures, as well as from these historical researches.

In this manner I account for the rise and progress of *Antipædobaptism*, as well as of *Trinitarianism*; indulging the hope, that when opportunity shall have been given for examining into the state of things in the primitive times,† and consequently for distinguishing abuses from the genuine doctrines of Christianity, Antipædobaptism, as well as Trinitarianism, will be acknowledged to have no sufficient foundation; and that then, if the rite of baptism (to which I see no good objection) be retained, there will be no exception made to the case of infants.

Submitting all that I have written to your judgment and candour,

I am, with all due respect,

Dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Northumberland, February, 1802.

* See Vols. VI. VII.

† "We know very little," says Mr. Frend, "of the history of the early Christians for the first hundred years after the death of Christ, and, much as the deficiency of records may be lamented by the historian, I have accustomed myself to consider it as beneficial to the cause of truth. Had more ample materials been handed down of the age next to the apostolical, future times might have acquiesced too much in the practice and opinions of those early Christians, and have studied with less attention the true records of their faith in the New Testament.

"But Providence now seems to speak in the strongest and clearest manner to Christian societies. Study the Scriptures alone; make them the rule of your faith and practice. An apostle was suffered to err after divine inspiration, that you might learn to form your practice not by the practice of others, but by the inspired word of God. The early Christians ran into errors, that you might not make them the guide of your conduct: you have the revealed will of God in the Scriptures, and the interpretation of it will not be difficult, if you interpret scripture by scripture, not by the uncertain traditions and opinions of fallible men." *Animadversions* on Bishop Pretyman's "Elements of Christian Theology," 1800, pp. 18, 19.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

A SHORT SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF DR. PRICE, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF ALL HIS PUBLICATIONS.*

(See *supra*, p. 3.)

RICHARD PRICE was born on the 23d of February, 1723, at Tyn-ton, in the parish of Langeinor, Glamorganshire, being the son of the Rev. Rice Price, † who was for many years the pastor of a congregation of Dissenters at Bridgend, in the same county. ‡

At the age of about eight years he was sent to school to the Rev. Joseph Simmons at Neath, and having been continued there for three or four years, he was removed to Pentwyn, in Caermarthenshire, where he was placed under the care of the Rev. Samuel Jones, whom he was used to represent as a man of a very enlarged mind, and who first inspired him with liberal sentiments of religion.

Having lived here nearly as long as he had done with Mr. Simmons, § he was sent to the Rev. Vavasor Griffith's Academy, at Talgarth, in Breconshire. || In the month of June, 1739, his father died, ¶ and in the beginning of the following year he also lost his mother. ** Immediately after this last event he quitted Mr. Griffith's academy, †† and came to London. ‡‡ Here he was settled at the

* Annexed, in 1791, to the *Discourse*, Vol. XV. pp. 441—457.

† Who was "so bigotted to his own [*Calvinistic*] creed, that one day finding the boy reading Dr. Clarke's Sermons, he flung the book, in a rage, into the fire, with the most bitter invectives against him for his want of faith and orthodoxy." See "Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Richard Price, D.D. F.R.S. By William Morgan, F.R.S." 1815, p. 6.

‡ This congregation "was originally formed by Mr. Thomas, one of those clergymen who had been ejected from their livings at the restoration of Charles the Second." *Ibid.* pp. 3, 4.

§ "About three years." *Ibid.* p. 5.

|| "At the age of 15." *Ibid.*

¶ "Leaving one of his children," whom he had singled out "for his favourite, almost the whole of his property. His widow and other six children were, in consequence, involved in much difficulty and trouble." *Ibid.* pp. 6, 7.

** Whom Mr. Morgan describes "as a most generous and excellent woman.—Her son, with his two sisters, attended her in her last moments; and he has often expressed his admiration of the tranquillity and joy with which she viewed the approaches of death, and the prospect of a better world." *Ibid.* pp. 7, 8.

†† "At Talgarth, to which place he walked, over the mountains of Brecon, in the severe frost of that year (1740); and it was in his way thither that his mind was first engaged in studying Butler's Analogy; a work which never ceased to be the subject of his praise and admiration." *Ibid.* p. 8.

‡‡ "Having no means of conveyance, as he then lived with his two sisters who were no better provided for than himself, he had recourse to his brother, the heir of his father's fortune, who supplied him with a horse to carry himself and a servant as far as Cardiff, a distance of twenty miles, from whence he was left to trudge

academy,* of which Mr. Eames † was the principal tutor, under the patronage of his uncle, the Rev. Samuel Price, ‡ who was co-pastor with Dr. Watts for upwards of forty years.

At the end of four years he left this academy, and resided with Mr. Streatfield, of Stoke-Newington. At the commencement of his residence here, he assisted Dr. Chandler at the meeting-house in the Old Jewry. § He afterwards occasionally preached at Edmonton, and after having lived near thirteen years in this family, he was induced, in consequence of the death of his uncle and of Mr. Streatfield, || which had lately happened, to change his situation in life. In the year 1757, therefore, he was married to Miss Sarah Blundell, originally of Belgrave, in Leicestershire, but who had, previous to her marriage, resided for some time at Hackney.

In this place he lived for the first year after his marriage; but upon being chosen pastor of the Dissenting congregation at Newington-Green, he removed thither in the following year, ¶ where he continued till the death of his wife, which happened in September, 1786, and induced him once more to exchange his residence for Hackney in the succeeding March. After having officiated for some time at Newington-Green, he was chosen afternoon-preacher at Mr.

on foot with his bundle in his hand to Bristol; a further distance of forty miles. But luckily for him, a good-natured lady, seeing a youth in this forlorn condition walking over rough and dirty roads, took him into her carriage a part of the way, and so far relieved him of his fatigue and sorrow. From Bristol he set off in a conveyance, which to the best of my recollection" says Mr. Morgan, "he told me was no other than a broad-wheeled waggon." *Mem.* pp. 8, 9.

* "Founded by Mr. Coward." There "he devoted his whole time with *ardour and delight* (as he expresses himself in some of his private memoirs) to the study of mathematics, philosophy, and theology. *Ibid.* pp. 9, 10.

† "Of whose ability and virtue, he always and deservedly spoke with the greatest respect and esteem." *Ibid.* p. 11.

‡ "A rigid Calvinist.—In their conversation one day on controversial subjects, being asked whether he believed in the *proper divinity* of Jesus Christ, he very ingeniously answered in the negative, if by *proper divinity* was meant the equality of Jesus Christ with God. On which his uncle with some vehemence exclaimed, 'that he had rather see him transformed into a pig, than that he should have been brought up to be a Dissenting Minister without believing in the Trinity.' The horror expressed in this exclamation of the uncle will, perhaps, serve in some measure to account for the sparing manner in which he doled out a part of his fortune to the nephew who was the object of it." *Ibid.* pp. 13, 14.

§ "Here he seemed to acquire considerable popularity; but Dr. Chandler, for reasons best known to himself, advised him to be less energetic in his manner, and to deliver his discourses with more diffidence and modesty. This rebuke had its natural effect on the mild and unassuming temper of Mr. Price. To avoid an extreme into which he was in no danger of falling, he ran into the opposite extreme of a cold and lifeless delivery." *Ibid.* p. 11. This great defect he afterwards happily corrected, and resumed his energetic manner. See *Ibid.* pp. 37, 38.

|| By which "his circumstances were considerably improved." *Ibid.* p. 12.

¶ "During the first years of his residence at Newington-Green, Mr. Price devoted himself almost wholly to the composition of sermons; and so impressed was he with the necessity and importance of giving up his time entirely to works of this kind, that in some private memoirs which he has left of himself, he laments as a trifling waste of time the few hours which he spent in the study of mathematics and philosophy, and even in the harmless relaxation of visiting his friends. Excepting Dr. Franklin, Mr. Canton, and two or three other philosophical friends, his acquaintance at this period was chiefly confined to the members of his own congregation." *Ibid.* pp. 19, 20.

Radcliffe's* meeting-house in Poor Jewry Lane.† But in the year 1770, upon being elected pastor of the congregation at the Gravel-pit in Hackney,‡ he resigned the afternoon service at Poor Jewry Lane, in favour of the same service at Newington-Green, which he continued till within about two years of the death of Mrs. Price.§

During the last six years of his life he confined himself to the morning service at Hackney, which he regularly performed till the 20th of February, [1791,] when he preached his last sermon. On Wednesday, the 23d of that month, he was taken ill of a slow nervous fever, occasioned by his attending the funeral of a friend at Bunhill-fields. He languished under that disorder for a fortnight, and then seemed to be recovering. But on Saturday, the 17th of March, (when every symptom of the fever had disappeared,) he was violently attacked by a disorder in his bladder, which had been gradually coming on for ten or twelve years. This, though accompanied with the most excruciating pain, never excited a murmur or a groan from him.

In the intervals of ease he was placid, and even cheerful; but in consequence of the long continuance of the disorder, his strength and spirits were at last so reduced that he could not speak without

* Who quitted the ministry some years before his death, in 1777. See *Mon. Repos.* IV. p. 710. Mr. Radcliffe is now chiefly known by two or three pamphlets, which discover an enlightened and liberal spirit, and an "Eulogium on Dr. Lardner," anneexd by Dr. Kippis to his *Life of Lardner*.

† "The congregation to which he preached," at Newington-Green, "though highly respectable, was very small; and therefore, instead of officiating to them twice a-day, he was induced, from the hope of being more extensively useful, to accept an invitation in December, 1762, to succeed Dr. Benson as evening preacher in Poor Jewry Lane. But the experience of a few months convinced him that his sphere of usefulness was not likely to be much extended by this change. His hearers were equally thin in both places; which so discouraged him, that he had determined to give up preaching altogether, from an idea that his talents were totally unfit for the office of a public speaker." *Mem.* pp. 21, 22.

‡ See Vol. XV. p. 457, *Note*. "To the period nearly in which he was chosen minister to the congregation at Hackney, Mr. Price appears from the preceding account to have confined his studies almost exclusively to moral and religious subjects; but the different communications which he made to the Royal Society about this time seem to shew that he was becoming less scrupulous in this respect, and disposed to consider philosophical inquiries not altogether inconsistent with the profession of a Dissenting Minister." *Ibid.* p. 38.

In one "of these papers, he corrected an error into which M. De Moivre had fallen." Mr. Morgan adds "a remarkable circumstance which attended the composition of it. From the high opinion he entertained of the accuracy of De Moivre, he conceived the error to be his own rather than that of so eminent a mathematician, and in consequence puzzled himself so much in the correction of it, that the colour of his hair, which was naturally black, became changed in different parts of his head into spots of perfect white." *Ibid.* p. 39.

§ Of whom Mr. Morgan says, "The purity of her mind, and the benevolence of her disposition, had well fitted her to be the friend and companion of Dr. Price; and though their union was never blessed with an addition to their family, they were no less the objects of filial love and veneration to many of their younger relatives, whom they treated with all the care and kindness of the most affectionate parents." He adds, "I do not know that in any part of Dr. Price's life the amiable benevolence of his temper shone with more lustre than during the last illness of Mrs. Price." *Ibid.* pp. 115, 116.

much difficulty. On Saturday, the 16th of April, the violence of his disorder increased exceedingly—his pains became more and more frequent, and he was rendered totally incapable of taking any nourishment. At length, worn out with agony and disease, but still in the full enjoyment of his understanding, he expired without a groan * at half-past one in the morning of Tuesday the 19th. †

AN ACCOUNT OF ALL HIS PUBLICATIONS.

1. A Review of the principal Questions in Morals, first published in 1757. ‡

* See Vol. XV. p. 454, *Note*.

† See *ibid.* pp. 441, 457, *Notes*. I am tempted here to gratify myself by adding the following passages from Dr. Kippis's *Address* at his friend's interment:

"Dr. Price had no enemies, but such as were enemies to his public principles; and among those who differed the most from him in this respect, many were his zealous and affectionate admirers. It would be impossible to do justice to the number and respectability of his friends. His friends were of the first distinction for rank, and knowledge, and virtue. They comprehend the names which at present stand, or lately have stood, the highest in the records of science, of learning, of freedom, and of moral worth. With regard to his future fame we may say, in the language of Sacred Writ, that 'his memory will be blessed.' It will be honoured by all who knew him; it will be honoured in this country; it will be honoured in America; it will be honoured in France; it will be honoured in every part of the globe, in proportion to the diffusion of just sentiments concerning the rights of human nature.

"But will the honours which appertain to our beloved friend be confined to this world alone? No; he will, we doubt not, be crowned with the approbation of the Supreme Judge in the great day of retribution. It was not to this inferior scene that his views were limited. He was not one of those who entertain the gloomy expectations of perishing at death, but had a firm hope of immortality. His hope was grounded, in an especial manner, on the evidence of the gospel. With that evidence he was well acquainted; with that evidence he was fully satisfied; that evidence he gladly embraced. Hence did Doctor Price derive his fairest supports; and hereby was he animated in all his constant and vigorous endeavours for the advancement of truth and virtue, and the final happiness of man.

"It is not many weeks since Dr. Price stood upon this very ground, at the funeral of a beloved friend, and not far from the remains of a wife who had possessed and deserved his tenderest affection. He was deeply affected on the occasion, and it was the last religious service, of a public nature, that he ever performed." *Address*, pp. 22—26.

‡ Of which there was a third enlarged edition in 1787. See Vol. III. pp. 146—151. "The author, with his accustomed modesty, was used to express himself greatly indebted in the composition of this treatise to Hutcheson, Balguy, Clark, Butler, and Hume; but particularly to the latter, whose doubts and objections led him to examine the ground on which he stood, before he ventured to raise his own structure upon it." *Mem.* p. 19.

From the first publication of this work, "the fruit of his studies from his earliest years," Mr. Morgan dates his Uncle's "acquaintance with the late excellent Dr. Adams," (who died in 1788,) which "produced a friendship between them which terminated only with their lives." *Ibid.* pp. 15, 16. Mr. Morgan subjoins the following interesting detail:

"The modesty, candour, and benevolence displayed in this work, conciliated the minds even of those who differed most widely in their sentiments from the author. In this number Mr. Hume should be particularly mentioned, who, admiring the liberal manner in which his doctrines had been controverted, conceived so favourable an opinion of the writer, that it gave rise to an acquaintance which was

2. Britain's Happiness and the proper Improvement of it: A Thanksgiving Sermon preached at Newington-Green, 1759. *

3. A Method of calculating the exact Probability of all Conclusions founded on Induction. By the late Rev. Mr. Thomas Bayes, † F.R.S. With an Appendix, by R. Price. Read at the Royal Society, 23d Dec., 1763. Also a Supplement to the Essay. Read 6th Dec., 1764. ‡

4. A Sermon for the Benefit of the Charity-School in Gravel-Lane, Southwark, 1766.

5. Four Dissertations. 1. On Providence. § 2. On Prayer. || 3. On the Reasons for expecting that virtuous Men shall meet after Death in a State of Happiness. ¶ 4. On the Importance of Christianity,

continued on both sides with uninterrupted esteem and friendship. Mr. Hume had been so little accustomed to civility from his theological adversaries, that his admiration was naturally excited by the least appearance of it in any of their publications. Dr. Douglas, (the late Bishop of Salisbury,) Dr. Adams, and Mr. Price, were splendid exceptions to this rudeness and bigotry. Having been opposed by these divines with the candour and respect which were due to his abilities, and which it is shameful should ever be wanting in any controversy, he was desirous of meeting them all together, in order to spend a few hours in familiar conversation with them.

"Accordingly, they all dined, by invitation, at Mr. Cadell's in the Strand; and, as might be expected, passed their time in the utmost harmony and good humour. In a subsequent interview with Mr. Price, when Mr. Hume visited him at his house at Newington-Green, he candidly acknowledged that on one point Mr. Price had succeeded in convincing him that his arguments were inconclusive; but it does not appear that Mr. Hume, in consequence of this conviction, made any alteration in the subsequent edition of his Essays." *Mem.* pp. 16, 17.

In 1767 this work had attracted attention in France, as appears by the following Letter:

"Rev. and dear Sir,

"Supposing that the foreign literary journals do not fall in your way, I send you the following account of your late work, as given in the *Bibliothèque des Sciences et des Beaux Arts* for January, February, and March, 1767. After reciting the title, the authors say, 'On devoit déjà à Mr. Price un excellent Traité sur les principales questions de la Morale. L'Ouvrage dont on vient de voir le Titre mettra le sceau à la réputation de l'Auteur, et ne manquera sans doute pas d'être traduit en diverses langues. On y trouve tout ce qu'une méditation profonde, une parfaite connoissance de la religion, un esprit véritablement philosophique, une piété tendre et éclairée peuvent dicter de meilleur sur les sujets annoncés.'

"With sincere esteem I am,

"Dear Sir, yours, &c.

"B. FRANKLIN.

"Craven-Street, October 22, 1767."

Ibid. pp. 17, 18, Note.

* This *Antigallican* composition, formed on the narrow principles of *patriotism*, was not worthy of such a *philanthropist* as Dr. Price became, "whose riper years" in this instance, may be truly said to "upbraid his green." See *Mon. Repos.* IX. pp. 614—618. This Sermon, as too well suited to their purpose, I have seen reprinted, about 1790, by a *Church and King* fraternity, in a cheap edition, for popular distribution.

† "Of Tunbridge Wells," where he died, in 1761. *Mem.* p. 24.

‡ See *ibid.* p. 26.

§ See a remarkable passage in this *Dissertation*, Vol. XV. p. 445, Note.

|| Formed from "the sermons which he had preached on private prayer." *Mem.* p. 23.

¶ See Vol. XV. p. 453, Note.

the Nature of Historical Evidence, and Miracles, * 1767. The 4th Edition, 1777.

6. The Vanity, Misery, and Infamy of Knowledge without suitable Practice: A Sermon preached at Hackney, 1770.

7. Observations on Reversionary Payments; on Schemes for providing Annuities for Widows and Persons in old Age; on the Method of calculating the Values of *Assurances of Lives*; and on the *National Debt*. To which are added, Four Essays on different Subjects in the Doctrine of *Life Annuities* and *Political Arithmetic*, 1771. The 4th Edition enlarged into Two Volumes by additional Notes and Essays, a Collection of New Tables, a History of the Sinking Fund, and a *Postscript* on the *Population* of the Kingdom. †

8. An Appeal to the Public, on the Subject of the National Debt, 1772. ‡ The 2d Edition; with an Appendix, containing Explanatory Observations and Tables.

9. Two Tracts on Civil Liberty, the War with America, and the Debts and Finances of the Kingdom; with a General Introduction and Supplement, 1776. § Eighth Edition.

10. Correspondence between Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley on the Subjects of *Materialism* and *Necessity*, 8vo. 1778. ||

11. A Sermon delivered to a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters at Hackney, on the 10th of February, 1779, being the day appointed for a General Fast on account of the War with *America*. The 2d edition; to which are added, Remarks on a Passage in the Bishop of London's Sermon, on Ash-Wednesday, 1779. ¶

* "The Dissertation on Miracles had been written as early as the year 1760, and read to Mr. Canton, Mr. Rose, and some other friends, who all concurred in recommending the publication of it. In this dissertation, which was intended as an answer to Mr. Hume's arguments against the credibility of miracles, Mr. Price had, as he thought, expressed himself improperly, by speaking of the *poor sophistry* of those arguments, and using other language of the same kind.

"When he sent a copy of his book to Mr. Hume, who was then one of the under-secretaries of state, he made an apology to him, and promised that nothing of the kind should appear in another edition. He received, in consequence, a very flattering letter from Mr. Hume, which he regarded more as a matter of civility, than as a proof of its having wrought any change in the sentiments of that philosopher. When the work, however, appeared in a second edition he fulfilled his promise, and sent him a correct copy; for which he immediately received an acknowledgement, expressive of Mr. Hume's *wonder at such scrupulosity in one of Mr. Price's profession*." *Mem.* pp. 23, 24.

† See *ibid.* pp. 41, 43, 173.

§ See *supra*, p. 4, Note †.

‡ See *ibid.* p. 43.

|| Vol. IV. pp. 1—121.

¶ "In the Chapel Royal, which he afterwards published and addressed to the clergy of his diocese. Unfortunately for the Bishop, he had maintained those very opinions in former times, which he now reprobated with so much vehemence; and Dr. Price, as the best answer, quoted a few passages from what the learned prelate had written in his earlier years, (in a sermon preached at the assizes in Durham, in the year 1764,) and left him to the choice either of condemning his old principles, or attempting the more difficult task of reconciling them with his new ones." *Mem.* p. 70.

"Dr. Price defended himself with great spirit; and Mr. Hayley, in *An Elegy on the Ancient Greek Model*, which he inscribed to Bishop Lowth, introduced, in the following lines, a kind of expostulation with him for having in some degree deserted the interests of freedom:

O Lowth! we saw thy radiant name on high,
Amid the purest lights of learning's sky;

12. An Essay on the Population of England, from the Revolution to the present Time. * With an Appendix, containing Remarks on the Account of Population, Trade, and Resources of the Kingdom, in Mr. Eden's Letters to Lord Carlisle, 1780. 2d Edition.

13. A Sermon addressed to a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters at Hackney, on February 21, 1781, being the Day appointed for a General Fast. †

14. The State of the Public Debts and Finances at signing the Preliminary Articles of Peace, in January, 1783; with a Plan for raising Money by Public Loans, and for Redeeming the Public Debts. Postscript to the State of the Public Debts and Finances. 2d Edition. ‡

15. Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution, and the Means of rendering it a Benefit to the World. § To which

And long, if true to Freedom's guiding voice,
Long in that splendour shall that sphere rejoice;
One passing vapour shall dissolve away,
And leave thy glory's unobstructed ray.
But while on Fame's high precipice you stand,
Be nobly firm; nor bend the virtuous hand,
Fill'd with rich sweets from Freedom's flow'ry mead,
To pluck Servility's oblivious weed!
High in the Court's rank soil that creeper winds,
And oft with dark embrace the crosier binds;
While squeez'd from thence the subtle prelate flings
Its luscious poison in the ear of Kings."

British Plutarch, (Art. Lowth,) Dublin, 1793, II. p. 337.

* See *Mem.* p. 86.

† See *supra*, p. 5, Note *.

‡ See *Mem.* pp. 101—103.

§ "Though the forms of their government," says Mr. Morgan, "were in general much more liberal than those of any other country, yet the observations which he introduced on civil and religious liberty were not the less important, in leading them to more enlarged views in regard to the freedom of discussion, the liberty of conscience, and the civil establishment of religion." *Ibid.* pp. 105, 106.

The following proofs of the manner in which these *Observations* were received in America, are too interesting to be here omitted :

"*Extract of a Letter from Mr. Clark, at Boston, dated April, 1785.*

"Your late publication is a noble testimony of that affection which you always possessed for these States. We are all sensible of the honour you have done us, and we gratefully acknowledge our obligation. Dr. Chauncy is delighted with the work. He thanks you most sincerely for the generous concern you have discovered for his country, and he hopes his country will have wisdom to adopt the measures you have recommended. Your chapter on liberal inquiry cannot be sufficiently admired. I think it has already liberated some minds. May it be candidly read by all, and may you have the exalted happiness of seeing rational Christianity flourish by your labours!"

"*Extract of a Letter from Dr. Wheeler, of Dartmouth-College, dated August, 1785.*

"Your observations on the importance of the American Revolution, I have had the pleasure to read with particular attention. I cannot tell you how great the applause is which its author receives throughout these States. The President, [Franklin,] confined by a lingering disease, wrote a letter to the Assembly at their session last February, inclosing the *Observations*, &c. He informed the Legislature that the remarks in this pamphlet were the best legacy which he could leave them. He prayed earnestly that the spirit of them might animate the manners and dispositions of legislators and people to the latest age." *Ibid.* pp. 106, 107.

is added, a Letter to Dr. Price, from the late M. *Turgot*, * Comptroller-General of the Finances of France; and a Translation of a Tract published in France, in 1784, and entitled, *The Will of Fortune Ricard*.

16. A Volume of "Sermons on the Christian Doctrine as received by the different Denominations of Christians.† To which are added, Sermons on the Security and Happiness of a virtuous Course;‡ on the Goodness of God, and the Resurrection of Lazarus," 1786. §

17. A Discourse on "the Evidence for a future Period of Improvement in the State of Mankind," || "delivered on Wednesday, the 25th of April, 1787," ¶ "to the Supporters of a New Academical Institution among Protestant Dissenters," ** 1787.

* Who died in 1781, aged 54. *Turgot's* biographer takes notice of his correspondence "avec le Docteur Price sur les principes de l'Ordre Social, ou sur les moyens de rendre la Révolution de l'Amérique utile à l'Europe et de prévenir les dangers où cette République naissante étoit exposée." *Vie de M. Turgot, (Londres,)* 1786, p. 201.

† The following documents I have copied from the *Minute Book* of the *Gravel-Pit Meeting*, Hackney :

"Sunday, 21st August, 1785.

"Resolved unanimously,—That the thanks of this congregation be returned to the Rev. Dr. Price for his excellent sermons lately preached to us, on the Gospel of Christ, and that he be desired to print them."

"TO MR. COTTON, HACKNEY.

"Yarmouth, 26th August, 1785.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have received with particular satisfaction the letter you have sent me, by the desire and in the name of the Congregation at Hackney; and I feel sincere gratitude for the candour with which you and the other subscribers and members accept my services. Nothing could make me happier than any service or labour by which I could advance their best interests, and could I believe that the Sermons I have lately preached to them would answer this end, and be the means of communicating juster sentiments of the gospel of Christ, and of promoting a liberality of temper among the different denominations of Christians, I should undoubtedly resolve to publish them. But I suspect the danger of plunging myself into controversy, which would give me trouble, and for which I am unfit. Some of my good *Socinian* friends would immediately attack me, and they are so full of zeal and so assured they are right, that I am afraid of encountering them. I have less apprehension from those in the opposite scheme, from *Calvinists* and *Churchmen*; but, probably, some of them also would attack me. I cannot, however, say, that I have no thoughts of publishing those sermons. The approbation with which my friends at Hackney have honoured them, and their request, cannot but influence me strongly; and they may, probably, make a principal part of a volume of sermons, the publication of which, some time or other, I have long had in view. I shall be obliged to you for communicating to the congregation these sentiments, delivering at the same time, my best respects and wishes.

"I am, &c.

"RICHARD PRICE."

† These two sermons are among the tracts of the *Unitarian Society*.

§ See Sir W. Jones, *supra*. p. 5, Note †. "The second edition corrected; with an Appendix, occasioned by Dr. Priestley's Letters to the Author," 1787. See Vol. XVIII. pp. 370—416, 446—478.

|| "With the Means and Duty of promoting it."

¶ "At the Meeting-House in the Old Jewry, London."

** In this Discourse Dr. Price takes occasion to declare himself "so far from pre-

18. A Discourse on the Love of our Country; delivered on Nov. 4, 1789, at the Meeting-House in the Old Jewry, to the Society for commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain.* With an Appendix, containing the Report of the Committee of the Society; an Account of the Population of France; and the Declaration of

ferring a government purely republican," that he regarded "our own constitution of government, as better adapted than any other to this country, and, in theory, excellent;" adding in a *Note*, "What I here say of myself I believe to be true of the whole body of *British* subjects among Protestant Dissenters. I know not *one* individual among them who would not tremble at the thought of changing into a democracy our mixed form of government." *Discourse*, pp. 30, 31. There were, however, I suspect, individuals, unknown to Dr. Price, who, had such a change appeared to be the nation's will, would have been little disposed to "tremble at the thought."

The preacher, however, hastens to "an object necessary to be attended to by the enlightened part of mankind, in order to improve the world. I mean," says he, "gaining an open field for discussion, by excluding from it the interposition of civil power, except to keep the peace: by separating religion from civil policy; and emancipating the human mind from the chains of church-authority, and church-establishments."

"The period," proceeds the preacher, *rapt into future times*, "to which I have been carrying your views, must be preceded by the downfall of all slavish and antichristian hierarchies." [See Vol. XV. p. 445, *Note*, *Par.* 2.]—"They are, by certain prophecy, destined to destruction. The liberality of the times has already loosened their foundations. The obstinacy of their adherents is increasing their danger: and the wise and virtuous of all descriptions should make themselves willing instruments in the hands of Providence to hasten their removal; not by any methods of violence; but by the diffusion of knowledge, and the quiet influence of reason and conviction." *Discourse*, pp. 31—33.

* See *supra*, p. 4, *Note* †; Vol. XV. p. 440. The following conclusion of this *Discourse* was the passage which chiefly excited the eloquent invectives of *Burke*. It certainly merited the abuse of a politician who, as soon appeared, was now writing and declaiming, to deserve a pension, justly due to his eminent talents, but poorly earned by his servile application of them:

"What an eventful period is this! I am thankful that I have lived to it; and I could almost say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*. I have lived to see a diffusion of knowledge, which has undermined superstition and error. I have lived to see the rights of men better understood than ever; and nations panting for liberty, which seemed to have lost the idea of it. I have lived to see THIRTY MILLIONS of people, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice; their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects. After sharing in the benefits of one revolution, I have been spared to be a witness to two other revolutions, both glorious. And now, methinks, I see the ardour for liberty catching and spreading; a general amendment beginning in human affairs; the dominion of kings changed for the dominion of laws, and the dominion of priests giving way to the dominion of reason and conscience.

"Be encouraged, all ye friends of freedom, and writers in its defence! The times are auspicious. Your labours have not been in vain. Behold kingdoms, admonished by you, starting from sleep, breaking their fetters, and claiming justice from their oppressors! Behold, the light you have struck out, after setting AMERICA free, reflected to FRANCE, and there kindled into a blaze that lays despotism in ashes, and warms and illuminates EUROPE!

"Tremble all ye oppressors of the world! Take warning all ye supporters of slavish governments, and slavish hierarchies! Call no more (absurdly and wickedly) REFORMATION, innovation. You cannot now hold the world in darkness. Struggle no longer against increasing light and liberality. Restore to mankind their rights; and consent to the correction of abuses, before they and you are destroyed together." *Discourse*, ed. 2, 1789, pp. 49—51.

Rights by the National Assembly of France, 1789. Fifth Edition, 1790; with additions, containing Letters and Communications from France, with the Answers to them. *

No. II.

INTRODUCTION TO ESSAYS ON THE HARMONY.

(See *supra*, p. 6.)

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

So many have been the schemes of harmonizing the Four Gospels, and so little general satisfaction has any of them given to the learned, that a new attempt of the kind must appear very unpromising, and will hardly gain a sufficient degree of attention. From a general idea of the great uncertainty, or at least the great difficulty of this subject, I myself thought the time to be thrown away that was employed in an inquiry into it; till accidentally meeting with *Mr. Mann's Dissertations on the Times of the Birth and Death of Christ*, ‡ and finding there the outlines of a harmony, upon very different principles from any that I had seen before, I was induced to consider this business with some attention; and after weighing his arguments, I was as much struck with the marks of probability and truth they carried with them, as I had been at first with their novelty only. Upon this I set about drawing out a harmony from his general hints, and in the course of this work, a variety of other arguments occurred to me in favour of Mr. Mann's scheme, as well as reasons that induced me to depart from his disposition of some of the events in the history of our Lord. The result of all my disquisitions on this subject, I beg leave to lay before the public, by the channel of your *Repository*, in four or five *Essays*; § and I shall be very glad to hear any objections that may be made to any thing I shall advance.

The harmony of the Gospels is by no means a matter of indiffer-

* In the "Preface to the Fourth Edition" which first contained these *additions*, after easily shewing that he was not, as "described" by Burke, "a barbarian delighted with blood," Dr. Price very fairly asks, "what candour or what moderation can be expected in a person so frantic with zeal for hereditary claims and aristocratical distinctions as to be capable of decrying popular rights and the aid of philosophy in forming governments; of lamenting that the age of chivalry is gone; and of believing that the insults offered by a mob to the Queen of France have extinguished for ever the glory of EUROPE?" *Pref.* p. vi.

† *Theol. Repos.* 1770, II. pp. 38—41.

‡ See *supra*, p. 15, Note †.

§ Which appeared in *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 41—50, 98—122, 230—247, 313—327. These *Essays*, with a paper in *Theol. Repos.* III. pp. 462—469, are now dispersed, with a few variations and some additions, among the Sections of the "Observations on the Harmony," *supra*, pp. 49—118.

ence to Christianity. The evidence of the evangelical history is concerned in it, in a variety of respects. If the different histories of the life of Christ be utterly irreconcilable in things of consequence, that is, in things of such a nature, as that persons who lived in those times, and who undertook to write an account of them, could not but be well acquainted with, and have attended to, they will none of them be credible. On the other hand, if they agree in every minute particular, and arrange every incident in the same order, they will be suspected of having written in concert; and all their credit, as independent evidences, will be lost.

I flatter myself that the result of my observations will exhibit the evidence of the Gospel history in the clearest and strongest point of light; as they will shew such an agreement of the four historians in things of consequence, and at the same time such a variation and disagreement in things of little or no consequence, as are, in fact, found in all the most credible histories; so that an unbeliever will see, that the evidence of the history of *Christ* is exactly of the same nature with that of *Julius Caesar*, or any other person of antiquity, the particulars of which are never called in question. I very much approve of the observations of your correspondent *Paulinus* on this subject.*

I may add, that this subject of the Gospel harmony cannot but interest the curiosity of every Christian, and especially of persons who have a taste for criticism and antiquities. What pains have been taken, by classical critics, to ascertain the exact dates of the most trivial incidents in the life of *Cicero*, and other persons of eminence, in ancient or modern history! The motive to all this pains could be nothing but the *interest* they took, and which they imagined their readers would take, in the lives of those heroes, and the desire that unavoidably results from it, of having as precise and definite an idea as possible, of every thing in which they were concerned.†

And are not Christians particularly interested in the history of Christ, whose life we consider as of infinitely more consequence to us, and to all mankind, than that of any other person that ever figured on the theatre of the world? If we really think, and feel ourselves thus interested in the life of our Saviour, and consequently frequently reflect upon it, we cannot help wishing to come at the most satisfactory knowledge of every thing related of him, whether it be of more, or of less consequence; and it will give us pleasure to be able to fix the time and place of the most minute incidents

* See *supra*, p. 97, *Note*. The following introductory paragraph does not appear to have been copied in the *Observations*:

"It has been, almost universally, the endeavour of the friends of revelation, to demonstrate the perfect harmony of the Scriptures, and to account for every seeming contradiction in those writings, without admitting any difference of opinion, or conceptions of things in the authors. In general, they appear to me to have succeeded pretty well in their attempts; but I cannot help thinking, both that they have failed in some instances, and also that they have endeavoured to carry this circumstance of agreeing, farther than their professed object, the defence of revelation, requires; nay, so far as is really unfavourable to its defence, in the minds of men who duly consider the nature of historical evidence." *Theol. Repos.* l. p. 141.

† See *supra*, pp. 6, 7.

relating to it. I appeal to the feelings of all those who interest themselves in the history of the dead.

It may recommend this subject to scholars and philosophers to observe, that it affords as much room for the display of critical sagacity, as any other subject whatever.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your constant Reader,

LIBERIUS.

No. III.

MR. MANN ON THE DURATION OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY.*

(See *supra*, p. 17.)

THE prevailing opinion for many ages, among the men of letters as well as the vulgar, has been, that the preaching of our Saviour extended to four passovers, that is, three complete years, and some added a few months. But questions of this nature are not to be determined by plurality of voices, but by weighing of reasons. The arguments which induce us to think that Christ appeared in public but a year, or very little more than a year, are these:

1. That *Luke* professing to give the history of the life of Jesus, and especially of that most precious part of it, when he went about his Father's business, teaching and doing good, assigns but two *epochs* of it in all; that of his birth, (ii.) and the other of his baptism, (iii.) and, mentioning no more, has with reason been commonly understood to comprehend, in the second *epoch*, his death too with his baptism, and both within the compass of the same year, or but few months more. For it seemed absurd to imagine, that *Luke* would have taken so much care to signalize his baptism only, with adding the reigns of the Roman Emperor, and of all the neighbouring princes in being, when that ceremony was performed, and at the same time pass in silence, without any such characterisms, his most important passion, of which otherwise *Luke*, as well as the other evangelists, recites all the most minute circumstances. To which may be added the probability above-mentioned, that *Luke* named *Anas* and *Caiaphas* both for the high-priests, for no other reason, but because *Anas* was in that office for the year P. J. 4738, in which most of the preaching and of the miracles past; and *Caiaphas* for the year 4739, in the first quarter of which Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, and afterwards suffered, and rose himself.

2. *Luke* says the baptism, as well as the death of Christ, was in the time of *Pilate's* administration. Let it be supposed then, only for the present, what will be afterwards more fully proved, that his death was at the passover of the year P. J. 4739, as *Daniel's* prophecy requires it should be: in that case, the baptism cannot have been twenty months before the crucifixion, because *Pilate* came

* Extracted from his "True year of the death of Christ," pp. 147—165.

not to Judea before the 11th of *Tiberius's* reign, which began Aug. 19, *An. P. J.* 4737, and he was not there probably full eighteen months before the final passover. Indeed the words of *Josephus*,* do not allow *Pilate's* government to have commenced even so soon as *P. J.* 4737; but that his predecessor *Gratus* continued during the whole eleven first years of *Tiberius*, which ended Aug. 19, *P. J.* 4738, *U. C.* 778. But *Josephus*, as well as most of the ancient historians, does so often speak of the last year as complete, when it was perhaps only begun, that there is good reason to interpret him so likewise in this passage. A multitude of instances of this sort might be easily produced, but one may be sufficient. In the 14th Book of his *Antiquities*, he relates the first taking of *Jerusalem*, by *Pompey*, naming the *consuls* of the year *U. C.* 691; and the second taking of it by *Herod* and *Sosius*, on the same day of the month, naming the *consuls* of the year *U. C.* 717, which, he says, was 27 years after the first; and yet, by his own account, it could not have been more than 26 years and one day. Nay, *Petit* quotes it for a maxim of the *Rabbies*, "*Dies unus in fine anni pro anno numeratur.*"

3. That passage of *Isaiah*, (lxi. 1, 2,) which Christ himself read in the synagogue at *Nazareth*, and notified it to be then fulfilled, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me—to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," was anciently thought, and seems now to signify, that Christ was to preach but that one year, in which God would accept of the Jewish nation, if they would repent. It is confessed, that some interpret this acceptable year, of all the time that passed from his death to the destruction of *Jerusalem*. But, though the execution of the wrath of heaven was so long delayed, the condemnation and rejecting of the nation appear to have been decreed, upon the close of this "acceptable year," and their refusal of the grace then offered to them. God had declared, (*Deut.* xviii. 19,) that *whosoever would not hearken to what that prophet should speak in his name, he would require it of him, and that soul should be destroyed from among the people*. The Baptist had strongly intimated, that the time of acceptance was exceedingly short, by saying, "The axe is laid to the root of the tree." And *Messiah* himself passed a terrible sentence on those towns of *Palestine*, that did not receive the disciples he sent; but expressly on *Chorazin*, *Bethsaida*, *Capernaum*, (*Matt.* xi. 21; *Luke* x. 12,) on *Jerusalem*, (*Matt.* xxiii. 37,) of which he pronounced at last with tears of compassion, (*Luke* xix. 42,) *that the things which belonged to her peace, were then hid from her eyes*; and on the whole nation, a little before his passion, for *killing the Son of the Lord of the vineyard*; (see *Matt.* xxi. 41, and xxiii. 35, 36;) from all which declarations it may be concluded, that the time of *acceptation* given to the *Jewish* people in general, (though some would afterwards be saved out of that perverse generation, *Acts* ii. 40,) was therefore called "the acceptable year," because it was only that year in

* *Antiq. L. xviii. p. 373.* (*Mann.*)

which he preached remission of sins, and God's acceptance, and which ended with his crucifixion.

4. The most learned of the primitive writers of Christianity, and who lived nearest to the age of the apostles, were mostly persuaded, that the publication of the gospel by Christ, and confirming it with miracles, lasted but one year. *

5. If we ascend one step higher, and consult the oldest writers, the evangelists; in three of them, *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, the course of the narration will not allow us room to suppose, that Jesus passed much above one year on earth after he began to teach, or that he saw more than two passovers after his baptism: the other is not mentioned expressly by any of them, perhaps because our Lord, not having then begun to manifest his mission and his doctrine in Judea, made that journey privately, and without any incident of great fame: but it must be understood in them all, about three months after the baptism, if that was in January. So that, if *St. John's Gospel* had not been thought to say more, we should never had reason from the other three historians, one of which was an eye-witness, to extend the preaching of Christ beyond one year.

Nay *John's* relation, if read with attention, will be found to comprehend the public ministry of Jesus in little more than the space of one year. For he certainly supposes no more than one summer, and one winter; he describes the passages of no more than two passovers, (and in all probability his original text mentioned no more than two,) no more than one pentecost, one *scenopegia*, one *encœnia*; that is, all the great feasts of one year, and those too in their natural order, as our Saviour assisted at them, excepting only that the 6th chapter seems to be transposed from its proper place, and should precede the fifth. The learned *Petit* has taken notice of this disorder, or *ὑστέρων προτερον*, as he calls it, in the course of the narration; but believes it to be want of method in the author. † We are rather inclined to think that the two chapters, beginning both with the same words, were anciently misplaced; and found this opinion on these considerations:

1. The last words of *ch. v.*, are spoke by Jesus in Jerusalem; the words immediately following, (in *vi. 1.*) without any introduction or preparation, represent him passing out of *Galilee* to the eastern side of the lake of *Tiberias*; here is then no connexion at all with the 5th chapter; but a natural and evident sequel of the end of the 4th chapter, which left him in *Galilee*. Again, the 5th chapter has the same coherence with the 7th, as the 4th with the 6th. For in

* *Clemens of Alexandria*, (*Stromat.* L. i. p. 340, and L. vi. p. 658,) *Tertullian*, (*contra Judæos*, C. viii.) *Origen*, (*περὶ Λόγων*, L. iv. C. i.) *Africanus*, (*apud Georgium Syncellum*, p. 322, &c.) *Lactantius*, (*Instit.* L. iv. C. xiv.,) and before them all in time, *Valentinus*, the learned heretic, for he was contemporary with *Justin Martyr* (in *Epiphanius*, *Har.* li.). And other testimonies probably might be added to these, if we would inquire; for the great *Scaliger* acknowledges, "*Vetustissima est opinio*," (*Can. Isagog.* p. 309: and *Petavius*.) "*neque paucorum, neque plebeiorum scriptorum fuit hæc sententia, sed doctrinâ et autoritate præstantium, et sanè vetustissimorum.*" (*Mann.*)

† *Eclog. Chronol.* L. i. C. xii. (*Mann.*)

ch. v. 16—18, &c., Jesus in Jerusalem is reasoning with the Jews, who seek to kill him: the 7th chapter opens with his going thence into *Galilee*, because those of *Judea* seek to kill him. But as the chapters stand at present, the 6th represents him teaching at *Capernaum*, in *Galilee*: and yet the 7th chapter begins, “After these things, Jesus walked in *Galilee*,” as if he were just arrived there from another province.

2. The *passovers*, as the chapters are now ranged, are multiplied beyond all probability. For *ch. iv. 45*, Jesus appears newly returned from the first passover, and cures the nobleman’s son of *Capernaum*: at the end of nine verses more, (*v. 1.*) he is gone back to the second passover, (as some reckon it,) and nothing more is reported of him during all the remainder of that first year. From this imaginary second passover, (*v. 1.*) when Jesus healed the cripple at the pool of *Bethesda*, in *Jerusalem*, to the feast of tabernacles, (*vii. 2.*) that is, according to the modern account, during all the second year, the third passover, and half the third year, he is said to have worked a miracle, the next day taught in *Capernaum*, and no more is said of him for all the rest of the supposed eighteen months. Now does it seem at all probable, that *John*, if he professed to write the history of Christ’s public ministry during the space of about three years, should have omitted near two years and a half of that time?

3. It appears from *Matt. xiv. 13*, *Mark vi. 31*, *Luke ix. 10*, that Jesus, immediately upon the news of the *Baptist’s* death, retired out of *Galilee*, which was *Herod’s* dominion, to the desert of *Bethsaida*, on the east side of the Lake of *Tiberias*, which was under *Philip* his brother, but a man of more justice and humanity; and that the multitudes following him thither too, he multiplied five loaves so as to feed 5000 men. This same miracle is related in *John vi. 5.* So that here comes in the first notice of the *Baptist’s* death: and yet in *v. 35*, Jesus is at Jerusalem, speaking of the *Baptist*, as of a person known to be dead some time before; “He was a burning and a shining light.” These apparent inconsistencies and improbabilities, are not to be supposed to come from *St. John* himself, but from the negligence of those who had the first keeping of his writings, or those who copied them: since all of them, but one, are at once rectified by replacing the 6th chapter before the 5th. But one difficulty even then remains, which has produced many more. The 4th verse of the 6th chapter, in our present copies, stands thus, *Ἦν δὲ ἐγγύς το πασχα, ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων.* “And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.” But it is hard to think that *John* writ thus: he had spoke of the passover, in *ch. ii.*; if he mentioned it here again, would there be any need of his adding an explanation of the word? Therefore, the judicious *Gerard Vossius* * would read it, *Ἦν δὲ ἐγγύς ἑορτῇ τῶν Ἰουδαίων*, “and a feast of the Jews was nigh,” leaving out *το πασχα*: and with great reason. For, certainly all the ancient writers who thought that Christ preached but one year, (and they are the ancientest and most eminent of all,) never read *το πασχα* in this verse. If they had, they must have reckoned this for a third

* In his dissertation *De Annis Christi*. (Mann.

passover, as the moderns have done, in the middle, between that mentioned in the 2d chapter, and the final one in the 18th, and consequently two years' preaching at the least. Besides, it is nowhere intimated, or ever supposed, that Christ assisted at any such third *passover*; which failure, if there had been one, is not to be imagined of him who fulfilled all righteousness, and was the perfect pattern of obedience to his Father's law. Το πῦσχε, was probably a marginal note of one, who thought to explain what "feast of the Jews" *John* meant; and soon crept into the text here with as little reason as it has in other places; for example, *ch.* ii. 23, and xix. 14. Whereas he in all appearance intended here, that *that* feast was approaching, which Jesus, in v. 1, went to celebrate; and that is by *Cyril* and *Chrysostom* very justly supposed to be *pentecost*.

These two amendments being admitted, the whole progress of that last year of our Saviour's life will be found to be orderly and distinctly related by *John*, with the several journeys he made to Jerusalem, at the great feasts of the Jews; beginning with,

1. The *passover*, or 14th of *Nisan*, *ch.* ii. 13, which by our computation fell that year, P. J. 4728, A. D. 25, on Monday the 2d of April.

2. The *pentecost*, or the 6th of *Sivan*, on Wednesday, the 23d of May, mentioned first in *ch.* vi. 4, as nigh; and again in v. 1, when Jesus went to it, and on the Sabbath following, May 26, healed the cripple at *Bethesda*.

3. The *scenopegia*, or *feast of tabernacles*, on the 15th of *Tisri*, answering to Thursday, the 27th of our September, in *ch.* vii. 14, in the middle of which feast, or on Sunday, the 30th of September, Christ began to teach in the temple.

4. The *encenia*, or feast of reconsecrating the temple, by *Judas Maccabæus*, and celebrated by the Jews ever after in memory of it, on the 25th of *Casleu*, which was that year, Wednesday, the 5th of December. *Ch.* x. 22.

5. The *Messiah's* last *passover*, at which he was sacrificed, the year following, P. J. 4739, which fell that year on Friday, the 22d of March. *Ch.* xiii. &c.

In this manner the history of *John* is cleared of perplexity, and reconciled with the other evangelists; so that all the four concur in comprehending, within the compass of one year, or little more, all the public transactions of our Lord, in sermons, miracles, disputes, and sufferings. From whence it will follow, if Jesus was 30 years old, and was baptized in January, P. J. 4738, that he must have been put to death according to the prophecy of Daniel, An. P. J. 4739.

No. IV.

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH HARMONY.

(See *supra*, p. 18, Note †.)

IN this *English* edition of the *Harmony of the Evangelists*, the text is a copy of the *Greek*; the entire history, with all the incidents and discourses, collected from all the evangelists, being distin-

guished by a larger character, and the collateral accounts of the same things being printed in a smaller character, in separate columns; so that they may be read and compared, or omitted at pleasure.

In this edition I have, however, attempted several things for the benefit of those who are unlearned, but of a liberal turn of mind; having found by my acquaintance with such persons, that some assistance would be of real use to them in reading the gospels, though a perpetual paraphrase and copious notes would be tiresome and disgusting. I may have failed in my attempt, but I have endeavoured to consult the real wants of a most respectable class of Christians.

With this view I have, in the first place, corrected our common version throughout, wherever I thought it necessary, either on account of its giving a wrong sense, or for the sake of changing some obsolete words and phrases. An intire new translation I thought unnecessary; and indeed it would not have been easy to make one, the general character of which would give more satisfaction, or more happily express the simplicity of the original writers of the gospel history, who were the farthest in the world from being writers by profession. I have taken care, however, to insert at the bottom of the page, what the common version is, except that I have not noticed the constant change that I have made of *Holy Spirit* for *Holy Ghost*, and of *dæmon* for *devil*, when the original was *δαίμωνιον*, &c. These occurring so often, the notice would have been tiresome. Other corrections of a trifling nature may also have passed without particular notice. In this correction of the English version, I must acknowledge my obligations to Michael Dodson, Esq., the worthy nephew of Judge Foster, and who to the studies peculiar to his profession, adds those of an infinitely more sublime and liberal nature, those of the learned Christian.

In the second place, I have partly collected, and partly supplied myself, and from the communications of a few of my friends, notes on those passages that seemed to require some illustration, not for the learned, as I have observed before, but for the more liberal of the unlearned readers; though some of the notes are more calculated for the use of the learned.

In these notes I have been more particularly assisted by my friend the Rev. Mr. Turner of Wakefield; and had not approaching age and infirmities prevented, he would have executed the whole of this part of the work; from which those who are acquainted with his valuable criticisms in the *Theological Repository* could not but have formed great expectations. One of the happiest circumstances in my life was my neighbourhood to him when I lived at Leeds. To his encouragement and assistance those who approve of my theological writings are considerably indebted, and without him the *Theological Repository*, one of the most useful works I ever undertook, would hardly have been thought of. Such friendships as these are enjoyed long after personal intercourse ceases. They are not *those of the world*, and will last and improve when the world shall be no more. Mr. Turner's notes are distinguished by a capital T subjoined to them. Others signed J were furnished by Dr. Jebb.

In the third place, I have given an *occasional paraphrase*, espe-

cially of those discourses of our Saviour recorded by John, where the connexion of the parts is not very apparent, and which the mode of paraphrasing is better adapted to explain than any criticisms in the form of notes. This paraphrase being simply intended to express the real meaning of the writer, I have seldom used many more words, and sometimes fewer, than my author. To paraphrase a plain narrative I thought quite superfluous, and more likely to introduce uncertainty and obscurity, than to throw light.

With respect both to the paraphrase and notes, I would only give my readers one caution, which is, that they would not reject my interpretation of particular passages, because, at first sight, they may appear not to be natural; for this first impression may arise from nothing more than former fixed associations of ideas, which may have no foundation in truth. And, judging from myself, I can assure my readers, that those interpretations which for some time appear the most unnatural and forced, may in time come to appear perfectly natural, and indisputably the true sense. A Papist thinks any other interpretation of the words, *This is my body*, than the most literal one, or that which implies the doctrine of transubstantiation, to be exceedingly unnatural.

I have every where supposed what is called Satan, or the devil, in the Gospels, to be an allegorical personage, or the principle of evil personified. This will, in some cases, appear unnatural; but let those persons who now think so, only consider the repeated and strong personification of the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, as a being sent by the Father or the Son, and by some thought to be the third person in the Trinity, and yet that it is now *generally* supposed to mean nothing more than a divine power or energy, and perhaps they will not think the personification stronger or harsher in the one case than in the other.

No. V.

ON THE CAUSES OF TRANSPOSITION. *

(See *supra*, p. 73.)

THEY who have been much employed in transcribing from books or writings lying before them, will, I believe, be aware, how easy it is to commit mistakes and make transpositions in their copies, by fixing their eye on a wrong place, when it is lifted up to the exemplar in order to proceed: especially will this happen, when the mind

* By *Vigilius*, the Rev. W. Turner, (see *supra*, p. 509,) who happily says, in his introduction to these remarks:

"If any thing in the world ought to be a public property, it is knowledge: if any kind of knowledge ought peculiarly to be diffused, it is the knowledge of those Scriptures which were given for universal instruction and improvement. It seems a kind of sacrilege to withhold and make a private property of any new discoveries which may open to us in this province: especially as we know not, how much we may owe to the guidance and illumination of him 'who giveth to every man severally, as he will,' but 'giveth to every man to profit,' or do good 'withal.'" *Theol. Repos.* 1769, l. p. 46.

grows fatigued by long employment, or its attention is dissipated and distracted by intervening circumstances.

Now, as before the invention of printing, all books were transcribed, and, for the most part, by persons who gained their livelihood by this business, it is no wonder, that mistakes of this kind sometimes happened in their transcripts; or, that when they happened, the writers did not choose to correct them properly; as rasures and blots would disgrace the appearance of their books, and render them less saleable. They thought it enough, if they inserted what had been overlooked, in the best manner they could, though somewhat out of its proper place. I suppose, that they who are conversant with ancient manuscripts, find in them not a few instances of transpositions of words, clauses of sentences, whole sentences, and larger portions, even whole pages, occasioned by the haste or inadvertency of the librarians or writers, and uncorrected through self-interest.

It seems reasonable to suppose, that like corruptions might happen to the more early copies, which are now perished by time or accident, and that they would be continued in all the transcripts which were made from them; as the scribes would not think it their business to correct, unless particularly directed, and seldom were able to correct properly. If then, all the manuscript copies of ancient books now remaining, or which were used by the editors of the several printed editions, were such only, as, besides the mistakes of their several transcribers, retained the corruptions of the more ancient copies from whence they were taken, we cannot hope for their direction to enable us to discover and rectify those corruptions.

Here, then, seems a proper employment for the attention and judgment of the true critic, in order to restore the works of the ancients to their original purity and integrity. Much has been happily effected in this way by the sagacity of learned moderns with regard to the *Greek* and *Roman* classics; particularly many confused passages have been restored to their proper order, and thereby obscurities removed, and the original spirit, form and beauty of sentiment and expression displayed.

Is it not also reasonable to suppose, that the ancient, not excepting even the first transcripts of the sacred books, might suffer like depravations from the haste and inattention of mercenary scribes, and that the copies taken from them would retain those depravations, and increase the number with new ones; especially, when we consider, in relation to the books of the *New Testament*, the long and severe persecutions the Christians suffered, and the diligence wherewith their adversaries sought for the sacred books in order to destroy them, whereby the copies would become few, kept concealed, and transcribed in fear, in haste, and often by persons unpractised in the business?

When afterwards more quiet and secure times ensued, and the demand for copies of the sacred writings increased, it is not to be supposed, that the booksellers and scribes would take much pains to seek out the purest and most authentic books, of which they would be but indifferent judges; but would take such as came in their way, or were recommended to them, to copy after. If then a

few of the more eminent booksellers happened to get books which had all been transcribed from the same faulty exemplar, it is easy to see, what a number of copies, all retaining the faults of their common original, would soon arise, and how widely they would be dispersed. It is not impossible, that this, or some other such cause, may have occasioned a concurrence, not only of all the manuscripts now in being, but also of the ancient versions, in exhibiting readings of the sacred text, which, notwithstanding such concurrence, may be erroneous.

If, then, by only changing the situation of a sentence, or clause of a sentence, in a passage of the holy writers, which appears at present confused and obscure, we can render it regular and easy, and produce a new force and beauty in the sentiments; certainly, it will be no presumption to conclude, that this was the original reading, though all the MSS. and versions may exhibit the present.

Many learned men have been aware of disorders by means of transpositions in several texts of the *New Testament*, and have endeavoured to rectify them by conjectural emendations, of which Mr. Bowyer has given us a large collection in his late edition of the Greek Testament.

No. VI.

A LETTER FROM THE REV. MR. JOHN PALMER * TO DR. PRIESTLEY.

(See *supra*, p. 75.)

Macclesfield, August 1st. 1777.

DEAR SIR,

IN your excellent *Harmony* “you do not see how to reconcile *John* i. 33, with *Matt.* iii. 13.” Will you lose so much of your time as to learn how I reconcile them, and give me your opinion upon it?

John, who was the cousin of Jesus *must* have been very well acquainted with him before his baptism; he *must* have known his temper and manner of life, and have entertained great expectations concerning him. It appears to me absurd to suppose the contrary, for reasons which will readily occur to you. He had learned, as we may reasonably suppose, (from *Luke* i. 43,) of his mother *Elizabeth*, that his cousin was a personage much superior to himself; for which reason when Jesus went to be baptized by him, “He forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” But by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus at his bap-

* Having been favoured with a letter from the Rev. Mr. John Palmer, late of Macclesfield, [See Vol. XIX. pp. 523—527,] on a difficulty which I had noted in my Dissertations, relating to John the Baptist knowing or not knowing Jesus previous to his baptism, I have, with his consent, inserted it in this work, thinking that it really solves the difficulty, and also throws considerable light on that part of the evangelical history. (P.)

tism *John* learned *farther*, that HE was the MESSIAH. He could, therefore, properly say, "I knew him not," (to be the MESSIAH,) "but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he who baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw" (the Spirit descend, &c.) "and bore witness that this (Jesus) is the Son of God" (or the MESSIAH).

After a careful examination, I think, that *no* person *knew* Jesus to be the *Messiah*, till *John* bore testimony at his baptism; notwithstanding the high terms used in speaking of him. (See *Luke* i. 2.) So strikingly proper are the words, "John came for a witness of the light, that all men might believe; he was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light." It appears that *after* the declaration of the shepherds, "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart:" and even after *Simeon* had spoken (as seems to us *now*) in the most express terms respecting him, still "Joseph and Mary marvelled at those things which were spoken of him." They still were not certain whether it was the *Messiah*, or some other inferior deliverer and prophet. I do not in the least wonder at their doubts; for as the *Messiah* was to be a great temporal *prince*, according to the prevailing opinion, how could persons of so inferior a station in life expect that he would proceed from their family? We may observe, that when he was "twelve years old," Joseph and Mary did not know what he meant, by "being about his Father's business:" and even then Mary is said to have "kept these sayings in her heart"—still pondering and still doubtful. His own brothers, even *after his baptism*, did not believe him to be the *Messiah*; and I do not think *this* very surprising; for children that are brought up together naturally form notions of equality which are pretty obstinate in maintaining their place. From the uncertainty of Mary, and the infidelity of the brothers, I infer, that those lofty expressions in *Luke* the first and second concerning Jesus, were not understood as *necessarily* implying that he was the *Messiah*; and of course that the application of texts of scripture among the Jews at this time was not *descriptive*, but merely *allusive*; which I think it of considerable importance to demonstrate.

If you think these thoughts worth perusing, I will give them some further attention. Several things strike me which make me imagine them of some consequence; though they would not, perhaps, have occurred to me, had not you mentioned your difficulty.

I am, dear Sir, with the highest esteem,

Your affectionate and humble Servant,

JOHN PALMER.

No. VII.

MR. MANN'S ARGUMENTS FOR THE OPINION THAT CHRIST PURGED THE TEMPLE ONLY ONCE, AND THAT AT THE LAST PASSOVER.

(See *supra*, p. 95.)

It is observable, that in the week preceding the last passover of Christ, three of the Evangelists, *Matthew*, (xxi. 12,) *Mark*, (xi. 15,)

and *Luke*, (xix. 45,) relate that extraordinary action of his driving the money-changers and traders of all sorts out of the temple, which some ancients took to be one of the greatest miracles of his life: but *John* alone, (ii. 14,) introduces it in the first passover after the baptism. Some have fancied that Jesus did it twice; others, with more reason, believe it to be misplaced in *John*. For it seems not at all probable, either that he did this more than once, or at any *passover* before his last. It was such a vigorous reformation of an abuse, which the greedy chief-priests had permitted and established for some vile profits of their own; and therefore carried with it a severe reproach of their corruption and misgovernment, which they would not easily suffer: it was a high authoritative act of prophetic zeal, exercised upon a multitude of knaves, like which nothing had been seen in the second temple; with an express avowal, which he generally avoided to make, *that he was the Son of God*. Such a thing, thus published to two or three millions, (for such numbers then came to a passover,) would it have remained a week unknown, or unpunished? Yet it is plain, that till after the death of the *Baptist*, and consequently after the first passover, neither *Herod*, nor many of the people had heard of Jesus: for the fame of his preaching induced both to imagine, that Jesus was only *John* revived. Nor is it likely, if he had thus signally manifested himself, that he should ever after charge all that saw and felt his miracles, and even his disciples, (*Matt.* xvi. 20,) not to tell, what he had owned, that he was the Christ.

Besides, if he had at this *first passover* displayed his mission with power, by routing that rabble of cheats out of his Father's house; would his own brethren, six months after, (*John* vii. 3,) insultingly bid him leave *Galilee*, where he was lost to the world, and go shew himself at the metropolis, and work his wonders upon that great theatre, as if he had never appeared, openly, there before? Would the chief-priests have accused him (*Luke* xxiii. 5) of having begun "from Galilee," to pervert the people with his doctrine, if he had before that, in Jerusalem, freely censured their mal-administration, publicly called himself the Son of God, which they (*Matt.* xxvi 65) said was blasphemy, and added those criminal words, "Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up again"? More might be added: but the concurring testimonies of *Mathew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, do sufficiently authorize us to believe, that this chasing away the traders from the temple, is by *John* described out of time, and should be inserted in the week of the passion. What follows on this occasion, in *John's* own history, is a confirmation of this conclusion. The Jews demanding some proof of his being commissioned by Heaven, to correct their disorders; he (perhaps with a turn of his finger pointing to his body) answers, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up again." But the Jews understanding by this temple the stately fabrick, in which all this past, reply, *Forty-six years has this temple been in building*, (for so it should be rendered,) *and wilt thou rear it up in three days?* Now those that returned from the captivity, in the year P. J. 4178, finished the building of the second temple, (according to *Ezra*, vi. 15,) in the sixth year of Darius Hystaspes, P. J. 4199, that is, within 22 years

from the beginning of the work, at the utmost computation. The Jews, therefore, could not mean that building of the temple by *Zorobabel*, but the other great augmentation of the temple itself, and of all its magnificent out-buildings, which was begun by *Herod the Great*, and though continued at a prodigious expense, with 18,000 workmen, was not finished (says *Josephus*)* till about 5 years before its destruction. *Herod* began this work the year that *Augustus* visited Judea, *An. U. C.* 734. *P. J.* 4694, and the 18th of his own reign from the death of *Antigonus*.† The 46th year, reckoned from this *epoch*, was *U. C.* 779, *P. J.* 4739, the very year in which, according to *Daniel's* prophecy, the Messiah was to be cut off. This reply, therefore, of the Jews, in *John*, proves, that these things past, not at the first passover after the baptism of Christ, but at the last, and in the last week of his life, agreeably to the relation of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*.

No. VIII.

ON TRANSPOSITIONS IN ANCIENT MSS.

(See *supra*, p. 165.)

Two of my learned friends having favoured me with some observations in support of what I had advanced, *Section V.* [*supra*, pp. 164—166] concerning *transpositions* in ancient MSS. I give them here in extracts from their letters to me.

One of them, I recollected, had some years ago informed me, that he was pretty confident that *four lines* in Virgil had been transposed, though no MS. of that author indicated any such thing. Thinking the fact curious, and of some use to my purpose, I lately wrote to him on the subject, and he was so obliging as to give me the following answer. The other letter, relating chiefly to the Scriptures, is still more to my purpose.

“ 6th August, 1781.

“ ————— I did not know that I had ever mentioned to you a transposition in Virgil's *Eclogues*, and had quite forgot that any such idea had passed through my mind. However, in the margin of my Virgil I have found a note that has revived them. The passage is in the 7th *Eclogue*. The four lines from the 53d to the 56th, which are given to Corydon, I apprehend belong to Thyrsis, and should have been preceded by the four lines from the 56th to the 60th, which, in all the editions, as far as I know, follow them.

“ My reasons for this opinion are two: In the first place, *Aret ager vitio*, &c. suits better with the decent elegance of Corydon, and *Stant et juniperi*, &c. *jacent* (an antithesis that does not suit the style of Corydon) and *formosus Alexis—videas et flumina sicca*, (an unpleasant hyperbolical image, ridiculing, as all along, the more grateful pictures of the opponent) agree far better with the drollery and libertinism of Thyrsis.

“ But besides this, in the next place, it deserves to be remarked, that from the 63d and 64th verses it appears that *Phyllis* (to whom Thyrsis opposes *Lycidas* in the 67th) is the flame of Corydon,

* *Antiq.* l. xx. c. ix. (*Mann.*)

† *Jos. Ant.* l. xv. p. 777; *Dio.* l. liv. p. 602. (*Mann.*)

whence I infer that the stanza in which *Phillydis nostræ* occurs, viz. before, at ver. 59, must have been Corydon's, not Thyrsis's; that is, that the two stanzas beginning the one with *Stant et juniperi*, the other with *Aret ager*, have changed places. Transpose them back again, and you will get rid of some impropriety and confusion.

"I might add a third reason for giving the stanza, *Stant et*, &c. to Thyrsis, viz. that from the opposition of *Formosus Lycidas* in the last stanza, to Phyllis, there arises a probability that the *formosus Alexis*, was put by the same speaker in an opposition of the same kind."

"11th August, 1781.

"The evidence which you have produced for proving the word *παροχα*, in John vi. 4, to be an interpolation, seems to me to amount almost to demonstration. And for the reasons offered by Mr. Mann and you, I have little doubt but that the 6th chapter of St. John hath been transposed, and ought immediately to follow the 4th chapter. You rightly observe in your second letter, [p. 165,] 'That transpositions are common things, and that the sacred writings are by no means exempt from them;' but you have given no *instances* of transpositions in any ancient writings. Your argument would, I think, be greatly strengthened by a fair representation of some facts of this kind.

"Dr. Kennicott, in the 22d and 23d Sections of his most excellent *Dissertatio Generalis*, at the end of his Hebrew Bible, lately published, hath mentioned several remarkable transpositions which have been made in different parts of the *Old Testament*. The ten first verses of the 30th chapter of *Exodus* have, he observes, been certainly removed from the end of the 26th chapter; and of this transposition, no person, who gives due attention to the reasons offered by Dr. Kennicott, can entertain the least doubt, although it must have been made, not only before all the Hebrew MSS. now extant, but also, as it seems, before the version of the LXX., that is, before the year 280 before Christ. That this transposition hath been made is sufficiently clear from circumstances: but it happens that there is direct evidence of the fact, for those ten verses are in their proper place between the 35th and 36th verses of the 26th chapter, in the Samaritan *Pentateuch*, which, however, was not seen in Europe till the beginning of the last century.

"Dr. Kennicott, in the catalogue of the Hebrew MSS. examined for his work, describes one of the *Pentateuch*, No. 7, which belongs to the Bodleian Library, and consists of three large rolls. Between the first and second rolls, two skins of vellum, containing *Exod.* xii. 38,—xvii. 9, are omitted, which two skins are found in a separate roll, sewed together in such a manner that seventy-five verses, viz. *Exod.* xiv. 28,—xvii. 9, stand before *Exod.* xii. 38,—xiv. 28. This fact is also noticed by Dr. Kennicott, in his second Dissertation on the Hebrew text, (pp. 571, 572,) and it shews very clearly how the transposition for which you contend, might be made by an improper conjunction of the skins of an ancient MS.

"Another very remarkable transposition I will mention, which hath certainly happened in Novatian's book, *De Regula Fidei*. This book consists of thirty-one chapters; and it was so evident from the

connexion of the sense, that eight of these chapters were misplaced in the old editions, that Mr. Welchman, in 1724, and Mr. Jackson, in 1728, thought themselves justified in rectifying the mistake, without the authority of a single MS. See Jackson's edition, p. 106, and Pref. p. 25, and his reply to Waterland, p. 492.

"These things have occurred to me as material to your argument; and you will be pleased to consider, whether it may not be right for you to give these or some other examples of transpositions actually made in ancient writings.

"As to *Mark* ii. 1, I will only observe, that in the Vulgate, printed at Venice, in folio, in 1478, the reading is, *Post Dies octo*, and that in Wickliff's *New Testament*, which is a translation from the *Latin Vulgate*, it is, *Aftir EYGHTE Daies*."

No. IX.

THE PREFACE TO THE DISCOURSE ON THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

(See *supra*, p. 275.)

THE following discourse * was composed while I was at Buxton, in the course of the last summer, [1790,] in consequence of being requested to preach to the company in the assembly-room, after the usual morning prayers of the Church of England. Having no sermon with me that I thought so proper as I could wish, for so mixed an audience, I composed *this*, which I thought would offend no Christian, but tend to confirm the faith of all; and which I also hoped might make a favourable impression on unbelievers, some of whom it was probable would be my hearers. Both these objects I have reason to think were, in some measure, gained; and in compliance with the request of some who were my hearers at that time, and of many others who have heard the discourse, much enlarged and improved, since, I now publish it.

Let any man who is an object of dislike, as I am, to the clergy of the Church of England, conduct himself with ever so much prudence and caution, I do not think it is possible for him to avoid giving offence. On this occasion, however, I flattered myself that I had succeeded; but I have since found that I did not. A person, who I believe may be styled a dignitary of the Church of England, has been very free with his virulent invectives against me on this most innocent business; asserting, on the authority, he says, of those who were present, and who, it is supposed, were also clergymen, that I, in a manner, forced myself upon the audience, by *requesting* to preach to them, which he calls "a most indecent intrusion," † and that I took the opportunity of "insulting the faith and the service of those who attended it;" that by "desiring to have the Litany omitted on that occasion, I shewed the most pointed disapprobation of the service, and took upon myself to rule and direct the service of the Church of England;" that my discourse "gave great

* Vol. XV. pp. 325—348.

† The passages marked with inverted commas, are from the clergyman's own letter, which was written with deliberation, on purpose to be shewn to me. (P.)

offence to several persons of respectable understanding, who uniformly represented it as calculated to weaken the evidence of our Lord's resurrection, as a divine and miraculous fact, wrought in conformity to the ancient prophecies;" that "it was scarcely attended to with patience," and that "in opposition to the solemn service which the congregation had just before offered to the Trinity, and in contradiction to those rules of the Church which forbid the maintaining of opposite doctrines by different preachers, I closed the whole with an Unitarian prayer. On the whole," he adds, "I easily perceive where this would end, if the Doctor's power was equal to the disposition he has manifested towards the Church of England. There would be as little toleration of those who should use the Liturgy, as there was in the days of Cromwell."

All this, and much more, having, as I have been informed, been said on the occasion, it may not be amiss to give the following short account of the matter; and hundreds who were present can witness the truth, or falsehood, of the greatest part of it.

Having, at the unexpected request of the company at the inn where I lodged, read a sermon to them on a Sunday evening; on the Tuesday following, General Stratton, and Mr. Sligo, a gentleman of fortune in Scotland, came to me, deputed, as they said, by the company at the Grand Hotel, and the other houses near the Baths, to request that I would give them a sermon on the Sunday following. I replied, that if it was the wish of the company, I would readily comply with it; and, returning my compliments to them, desired them to name the time and place. Some time after this they came to me again, and said that the company having considered of it, were of opinion that the most convenient place would be the assembly-room; and that the time that would best suit them all would be after their usual morning service, which however, with great liberality, they said they did not desire me to attend, as I might not approve of it; and that in this case I might be in the adjoining card-room till it was over.

Now, though I certainly do object, and very seriously, to do any thing that should be construed into a joining in *Trinitarian* worship, or offering to any creature, how distinguished soever, that homage to which I consider the one true God, *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, to be alone entitled, I make no scruple of attending the worship of any human beings occasionally, as a stranger and spectator; and I had no intention of absenting myself on the present occasion, till I found I could not prevail on the clergyman who read the prayers to shorten the service, which, on account of the length of my discourse, I wished him to do.

Not succeeding in this, I took an opportunity some time after the prayers were begun, of retiring into the card-room, for the sake of looking over my discourse, and striking out such parts of it as could best be omitted. When this was done, I returned to the prayers before they were quite finished. Still, however, my discourse was considerably longer than usual: but I was heard with the greatest attention, nor did I perceive any marks of disapprobation from any of the company. I concluded the service with a short prayer, addressed, as most of the prayers in the Liturgy of the Church of Eng-

land are, to the Father only ; so that if this was a contradiction to the *Trinitarian* forms in the same Liturgy, some of the prayers in this book are contradictory to the rest.

After the service, I was thanked not only by General Stratton and Mr. Sligo in the name, as they said, of the company, but by many of the most respectable persons present, some of whom avowed religious sentiments with respect to the Trinity very different from mine ; and in consequence of a previous invitation by the Provost of the university of Dublin, I dined at the Grand Hotel, where some of the particulars of my sermon, being new to part of the company, were the subject of conversation, and every thing that I heard was much in favour of it. Several clergymen were present at my discourse, and one of them, I was told, expressed much approbation of it. Others, it appears, were much offended at my being asked to preach on this occasion, and one of them, I was told, made an attempt, but without success, to express his disapprobation, in a discourse composed on purpose for the Sunday following. This, however, I did not know at the time, for the next morning I proceeded on my journey, and left the place.

Much of the offence that I gave on this occasion was by "taking upon me" (as the dignitary says) "to perform a part of the ministry of the Church of England, in a place of that description." Now, not to observe, that the place in which I preached was not consecrated, and that the appropriation of the building to the offices of any particular mode of religion was not a thing to be considered by *me*, but by those who applied to me to officiate in it, I see no reason why Christians of the most opposite sentiments may not meet to worship together, and edify one another, on principles that are common to them all, avoiding the introduction of any that would give offence. If I had an opportunity (which I would by no means decline) of preaching before a society of high Calvinists, or the most rigid Catholics, I would do it in such a manner as not to offend any of them, and yet I should have a sufficient choice of topics on which to discourse ; for the most important articles, not only of Christian practice, but also of Christian faith, are those in which all who ever called themselves Christians are, and always were, agreed ; nor should I have any scruple to desire any Christian minister, of whatever denomination, to preach for me, if I knew him to be a man of sense and discretion, who would observe the same rule of prudence in my pulpit, that I should make a point of doing in his.

I am not sorry to have this opportunity of saying, that I and my congregation gave this proof of our liberality in this respect the very last year, by inviting Mr. Berington,* a Catholic priest in the neighbourhood of Birmingham, to preach our annual Sunday-school sermon. All the subscribers to that charity were convened on the occasion, after it had been the subject of much conversation several weeks before ; and on my proposing it, it was cheerfully and unanimously acceded to ; and one of the company very pleasantly and properly said, that, as the devotional part of the service on that occasion would fall to me, he hoped that on that day I would omit praying for the downfal of antichrist ; which I very readily engaged

* See Vol. III. p. 215 ; IV. p. 122 ; XVII. p. 369.

to do. The invitation was accordingly sent, and, as the reader will see, by a copy of the letters which he will find subjoined to this preface, was very properly received, though it was not complied with, for prudential considerations, which I hope will not exist long.

I should have been ashamed of any congregation to which I officiate, had they made any difficulty of acting so liberal a part. We did not desire Mr. Berington to celebrate mass, or to do any thing else in which we could not concur with him; nor, I am confident, would he obtrude upon his audience any sentiments that he knew would be displeasing to them: and then what objection could there be to his principles as a Catholic, when they did not appear? A *Jew*, or a *Mahometan*, might recommend charity; and what Christian could object to hear him do it, if he did it well? From officiating in our places of public worship no men of sense, and of good moral characters, are excluded by any forms of consecration. We are ready to accept of the services of any person by whose discourses we can hope to be edified. Would all Christians act upon this generous principle, and be ready to meet on every piece of ground that was common to them, true Catholicism would be greatly promoted, prejudices would much sooner die away, and truth, which we are all equally interested in discovering, would have a much better opportunity of prevailing over error than it now has.

To the Rev. Mr. Berington.

DEAR SIR,

It is with peculiar satisfaction that I communicate to you the very hearty and unanimous request of the subscribers to our Sunday-school, to give us a sermon at the New Meeting, on any Sunday that shall be most convenient to yourself, within about a month from this time, when a collection will be made for the purpose, in aid of our subscription. We have all been charmed with your excellent and liberal tract on the subject, and we wish to shew the world that, different as our persuasions are, we can meet together on the common principles of Christianity and benevolence.

With very great respect,

I am, dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

Birmingham, October 29, 1780.

J. PRIESTLEY.

Mr Berington's Answer.

“DEAR SIR,

“THE request of the subscribers to your Sunday-school, which you have communicated to me, has given me great pleasure, though it has excited my surprise. It seems to indicate the dawn of better days, when difference in speculative belief shall no longer divide the hearts of Christians. The novelty only of the proposal surprised me. Nor can I sufficiently admire the liberality of sentiment manifested by the subscribers, on the occasion, a liberality which at all times I should be most happy to imitate, and to enforce. But I cannot comply with their request. It would give offence, I fear, to the society of which I am a member, (so unprecedented is the measure,) and willingly I would not shock even the prejudices of others,

unless by that shock I might reasonably hope to surmount them. The temper of the times likewise must be weighed, lest by precipitance we rather check, than encourage, that happy tendency to benevolent and generous sentiments which rapidly advances among those of my persuasion, and which you, and other friends to the best interests of men, are effectually labouring to establish in a wider sphere.

"I beg, Sir, you will convey my apology to the subscribers in the most grateful terms. They may know that I truly value the opinion they entertain of me, and that though, from prudential motives, I cannot comply with the letter of their request, it shall be my endeavour to serve the great cause they patronize by every means in my power. We differ, it is true, in points to which men, I think, have given an undue weight; but the common principles of Christianity and benevolence, as you express it, must ever remain, I trust, equally dear to us all.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Yours most sincerely,

"Oscot, Oct. 20, 1790."

"J. BERINGTON."

The subscribers to the Sunday-school being convened to receive this answer, we could only lament that any reasons of prudence should be an obstacle to Mr. Berington's compliance with our request, and even defer our exhibiting to the world an example of that liberality in which Christians are so much deficient, and which we wished to take this opportunity of recommending.

No. X.

REMARKS ON SOME PASSAGES IN Mr. EVANSON'S LETTER TO THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER. *

(See *supra*, p. 358.)

SINCE the preceding sheets were printed, I have once more perused Mr. Evanston's *Letter to the Bishop of Worcester*, of which, from having read it at its first publication only, I had but an imperfect recollection. I only remembered that I was then much pleased with the general object of the work, though offended at the manner in which the author treated some of the books of the New Testament, and that I was dissatisfied with his idea of the nature of *historical evidence*, which led him to lay such an undue stress on that of *prophecy*.

Speaking of miracles, he says, "The full force of this kind of preternatural evidence operates only on the eye-witnesses of the miraculous facts. To succeeding generations its weight is continually decreasing, in proportion to the length of time elapsed from the wonder-working period." † This, however, is by no means agreeable to reason, or experience. Our belief of facts of which we ourselves were not witnesses, depends upon our conviction that other persons, on whose judgment and integrity we could depend, were witnesses of them; and this persuasion once established, no more admits of any change than a persuasion of any other kind. It is now more than two thousand years since the invasion of Greece by *Xerxes*;

* Published in 1777, when Dr. Hurd was "Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry."

† *Letter*, p. 9. (P.)

but can it be said that the evidence of this fact is sensibly lessened? No person will pretend to say that it is.

The same is the case with respect to the deliverance of the *Israelites* from Egypt, with their passage through the Red Sea, and the river Jordan; for the miraculous nature of the facts makes no difference in the case, if the original evidence be proportionably strong, so that if the facts were credible in the first instance, they will always remain so; and our latest posterity will have the same reason to be satisfied with respect to them that we now have. If even all the histories, of which we are now in possession, should be destroyed, there will always be sufficient evidence that we, their ancestors, were in possession of them, and that will satisfy them.

That, in the view of Divine Providence, miracles are sufficient to convince not only those who are themselves witnesses of them, but all succeeding generations, is evident from what the Divine Being said to Moses previous to the grand exhibition from Mount Sinai: *Exod.* xix. 9: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever."* And this actually proved to be abundantly sufficient to convince, not that generation only, but every succeeding generation of Jews to this day; nor is there the least prospect of their faith failing in any length of time.

That one part of "the testimony of Jesus," as we read *Rev.* xix. 10, "is the spirit of prophecy,"† is what no Christian will deny; but it is by no means exclusively so. And it is remarkable that when Jesus himself appeals to three modes of proving his divine mission, in the 5th chapter of *John*,‡ he says nothing of *prophecy*. What he appeals to are the voice from heaven at his baptism, the testimony of *John*, and the miracles that his Father enabled him to do. Though among *these prophecies* he was enabled to deliver were, no doubt, included, there is no separate mention of them, as Mr. Evanson, from the stress that he lays upon this circumstance, would, I imagine, have expected.

In order to expose the Gospel of *Matthew*, [xxviii. 4, 5,] Mr. Evanson says, that according to it, the women who went to see the sepulchre of Jesus, were there at the same time with the soldiers, and consequently must have been present during the earthquake, and at the resurrection; because in speaking to them, and saying, *Fear ye not*, the writer uses the personal pronoun, ὑμεῖς, *ye*, and not merely the second person plural of the verb. This, he says, must have been by way of *contrast* to the fear of the soldiers, whom they must therefore have seen terrified and flying.§ But there are several instances in which the pronoun ὑμεῖς, *ye*, is used without any par-

* See Vol. XI. p. 157.

† See Vol. XIV. p. 498, *Note* *.

‡ *Vers.* 33, 36, 37. See Vol. XIII. pp. 166, 167.

§ *Letter*, p. 92. (P.) Mr. Evanson complains that "Mr. West," (*Obs. on the Hist. and Evid. of the Resur.* p. 88, ed. 2.) "when he gives a continued narration of the story according to his own system, passes by so great a difficulty, which it was not in his power to remove, by making the angel speak to the women, not in the words of St. Matthew's Gospel, where only the story of the watch is told, *fear not ye*; but in those of St. Mark's history, where no soldiers are mentioned, and where the angel therefore, having no occasion to make use of a contradistinguishing pronoun, says only, *Be not affrighted*." *Ibid.* pp. 92, 93.

ticular emphasis, or contrast: as when our Saviour says, *Matt. v. 48*, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father *who* is in heaven is perfect:" *xiii. 18*: "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower." Where is the contrast here? However, as the women might perceive that the guards were fled, (seeing, perhaps, some marks of their flight,) and might suppose it was from some cause of fear, the angel might allude to *that*, in bidding *them* not to fear. It is sufficiently evident that, according to this evangelist, the women did not see Jesus in the act of rising, and therefore could not have been present at the earthquake, or the flight of the soldiers. For the angel says to them, (*xxviii. 5, 6*), "I know that ye seek Jesus *who* was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen.—Come, see the place where the Lord lay:" so that the resurrection was evidently over before they came.

In this letter Mr. Evanson's preference of the Gospel of *Luke* may be easily perceived, and also his rejection of that of *Matthew*; but he seems at that time to have retained his respect for that of *John*, as of equal authority with other canonical books of the *New Testament*. For, speaking of what is there said of the conversation of our Lord with Nicodemus, he says, "I have frequently considered this passage with that attention wherewith it is the duty of every public teacher, and indeed of every Christian, to consider those parts of scripture especially upon which any essential doctrines of our religion are founded."*

No. XI.

OF THE DATE OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

(See *supra*, p. 379.)

SOME have thought that *Paul* refers to a written Gospel in his Epistles to the *Corinthians* and to *Timothy*, that this Gospel was that of *Luke*, and that if *Matthew* or *Mark* had seen this Gospel they would not have written any. Consequently the works that bear their names are spurious compositions.

The passages in which *Paul* is supposed to allude to a written Gospel are the following: *1 Cor. ix. 9*: "It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." *Ver. 14*. "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they *who* preach the gospel should live of the gospel." † *1. Tim. v. 18*: "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and the labourer is worthy of his reward." Now I think it is evident that the writer quotes the passage from Moses only as something *written*, and *scripture*, and not the saying of our Lord corresponding to it.

If the Gospel of *Luke* had preceded any other Gospel so long as this hypothesis requires, viz. eight or nine years, it would have acquired so much reputation, that some preference would have been given to it in Christian tradition; no similar work, not well known to be written by an apostle, or some person equally qualified, could ever have been ranked with it; and it could never have been supposed by any of the ancients that the Gospel of *Matthew* was prior to it. Nor is it possible to account for the universal opinion that

* *Letter*, p. 95. (P.)

† See Vol. XIV. pp. 84, 85.

the Gospel of *Matthew* was written by the apostle, and that of *Mark* by the companion of *Peter*, on the supposition of their being spurious compositions, of no real authority. The difficulty of imposing upon the whole Christian world such books as these, interested as every individual Christian was in the question, and this either while the supposed authors were living, or soon after their death, can never have been attended to by those who entertain such an opinion; and to effect such an imposition so completely in those peculiar circumstances, as to have no trace of the truth, far exceeds the powers of man; besides that it is not possible to imagine any motive for such an imposture. I think it very probable that *Luke* wrote both his treatises during the two last years of *Paul's* imprisonment at Rome, and that this supposition will remove every difficulty.

No. XII.

OF THE IDENTITY OF LUKE AND SILAS.

(See *supra*, p. 380.)

A LEARNED and ingenious friend of mine thinks that *Luke* and *Silas* were the same person, because it appears from *Acts* xvi. 19, 25, 29, that *Paul* and *Silas* only, were imprisoned at *Philippi*: so that, if *Timothy* accompanied them to that city, he was not with them when the *Pythoness* followed them; and if so, when it is said, (*ver.* 17,) “the same followed Paul and us,” *Silas* must be intended, and consequently he must be the author of the book. It is very remarkable, he adds, that *Mill* mentions four MSS. as having in this place *Silas* instead of *us*.

But though *Paul* might have twenty persons in his company when he was apprehended, it would not follow that they were *all* taken into custody. The magistrates might very well content themselves with taking the most zealous preachers. When *Peter* and *John* were imprisoned at Jerusalem, and when *James* was put to death there, the rest of the apostles, though we cannot suppose that they had been idle, or were unknown, were not molested; and though *Paul* had companions when he went into the temple at his last visit to Jerusalem, they were not seized along with him.

Timothy appears to have been in *Paul's* company at *Beræa*, on the same progress, (*ch.* xvii. 14.) so that there is no reason to suppose that he left him either at *Philippi* or *Thessalonica*; and if *Timothy* was with him, *Luke* might be there too. As “Paul and Silas” occur in several places, and “Paul and us” in others, it is not at all extraordinary that, in copying the book, the one should sometimes, by mistake, be written for the other.

No. XIII.

OBSERVATIONS ON INFANT BAPTISM. *

(See *supra*, p. 465.)

It appears to me, that few persons in these *Western* parts of the world, enter sufficiently into the ideas of the *Jews* and other *Asiatic*

* *Theol. Repos.* (1771), III. pp. 231—239.

nations; and that some objections to infant baptism cannot be satisfactorily answered without laying aside some notions that are, in a manner, peculiar to *Europeans*, and especially such as have prevailed in modern times. With respect to this subject, I cannot think that writers have attended so much as they ought to have done to the power of a master of a family in the *East*, and particularly how far his own character and profession usually affected his wife, children, and servants, and, indeed, every thing that belonged to him. When the *Ninevites* repented, they made their cattle to fast and wear sackcloth as well as themselves; not that they could consider their cattle as having any occasion to repent, but in order to express, in a stronger manner, their own humiliation and contrition. *Jonah* iii. 7, 8: And the king "caused it to be proclaimed, and published through Nineveh, (by the decree of the king and his nobles,) saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing; let them not feed nor drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth." *

Agreeably to these prevailing ideas, though circumcision was a religious rite, instituted as a symbol of the covenant between God and the children of Abraham by Isaac and Jacob, yet not only was *Ishmael* circumcised, but all the *slaves* of Abraham, who could have no more interest in the promises made to him, than others who were blessed in his seed, † and who were not to be circumcised. Such were the converts to Christianity. *Gen.* xvii. 10—14: "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised, and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your fore-skin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that his eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in thy house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his fore-skin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; ‡ he hath broken my covenant." *Vers.* 24—27: "And Abraham was ninety years old and nine when he was circumcised in the flesh of his fore-skin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his fore-skin. In the self-same day was Abraham circumcised and Ishmael his son. § And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him."

It is evident from this history of *circumcision*, and of the practice of *Abraham* in consequence of it, that the application of this rite to *Ishmael*, and the slaves of the household, was no more than, as it were, a necessary appendage to the circumcision of Abraham, as the master of the family. It must be considered as his own act only, and therefore the consent of *Ishmael* and the slaves cannot be sup-

* See Vol. II. p. 333; V. p. 271; XII. p. 370.

† See *ibid.*; Vol. XI. pp. 76, 77.

‡ See *ibid.* p. 77.

§ See *ibid.* pp. 77, 78.

posed to have been, in the least degree, necessary. From the same principles we must also conclude, that circumcision, as such, could not express any interest which the subjects of it had in the things signified by it; for then Ishmael and the slaves would have had an equal interest in them.

There can be no doubt but that when the *Jews*, in future ages, made converts to their religion, they obliged every master of a family both to submit to this rite himself, and likewise to see that all his household, or all that depended upon him, did the same. For the same reason, whatever rite had been enjoined them, and whatever it had expressed, the same people would, no doubt, have applied it, in the same indiscriminate manner, to the master of the family and all his household. It was natural, therefore, for the apostles and other *Jews*, upon the institution of baptism, as a token of the profession of Christianity, without considering it as a substitute for circumcision, to apply it to infants as well as adults. According to their general ideas and established customs in similar cases, they could not have thought of adopting any other practice, without particular directions.

Accordingly we find in the Scriptures, that the gaoler, professing his faith in Christ, was baptized, (*Acts* xvi. 33,) "he and all his," and (ver. 15) that *Lydia* "was baptized and all her household." Now it is certain, that to a *Jew* these phrases would convey the idea of the children, at least, if not of the domestic slaves, having been baptized, along with the head of the family. A *Roman* could not have understood them to include less than all who were subject to the *patria potestas*. *

It also appears to me to be very evident, from ecclesiastical history, and the writings of the Christian fathers, that infant baptism was the uniform practice of the primitive Christians, and continued to be so till, among other superstitious notions, they got an idea of the efficacy of baptism, as such, to wash away sins, and consequently of the peculiar safety of dying presently after being baptized, before any fresh guilt could be contracted. It is well known that, upon this account, the Emperor Constantine, and others, deferred baptism till near the hour of death.

An argument derived from the uniform practice of the primitive Christians, affects some persons very little, but with me it has great weight, as an evidence of its having been the practice of the apostolical times, and having the sanction of apostolical authority. Whatever appears to have been the practice of the apostles, I would conscientiously conform to, by whatever reasons I was led to conclude that it was their practice. Even their writings are no otherwise valuable, than as they are the most authentic evidence of what they *thought* and *did*; and in other cases, where this evidence cannot be had, all Christians are guided by proofs that are less direct and decisive. Thus it is from the evidence of *tradition*, deduced from the uninterrupted practice of Christian churches, that we set apart, not the seventh, but the first day of the week for the purpose of public worship; and not from any authority that can be produced from the *New Testament*.

* See Vol. II. p. 334; V. pp. 271, 272; XIII. pp. 455, 456, 458.

If we trace the progress of this affair a little farther, we shall find that when, by the prevalence of the liberal sentiments of Christianity, more account was made of slaves, as beings of the same species with their masters, and equally interested with them in the privileges and promises of the gospel; and especially when, in consequence of this, they acquired more civil rites, and were allowed to act for themselves more than they had done, they were considered as having religious interests of their own. Indeed, in the times of the *Romans*, slaves, being of different nations, were allowed (agreeably to the genius of the *Pagan* system) to practise some of their peculiar religious rites; and a great many of the first Christian converts were slaves, their masters, at that time, not finding themselves or their interest affected by it, and therefore not taking any umbrage at it.

It happened also, that the power of a father over his children, was much less in these *Northern* nations of *Europe*, than it was in the *East* or among the *Romans*, with whom also it is sensibly declined. On this account, and also because, from the very first promulgation of Christianity, it could not but be manifest that persons were interested in it as *individuals*, and not as members of families, or societies, I make no doubt but that, in general, if there were adult children or slaves in a family, at the time that the master professed himself a Christian, they were not baptized without their own consent; but no consideration that can be supposed to have occurred either to *Jews* or *Romans*, could have led them to make the same exception in favour of infants.

Considering how very different are the ideas and customs of these times, and these parts of the world, from those which prevailed among the *Jews*, when baptism was instituted, the peculiar reasons for applying it to infants are, in a great measure, ceased. But still, as the practice is of divine authority, it appears to me, that no innovation ought to be made in it by any power on earth; but that we ought rather to preserve those ideas which originally gave a propriety to it, especially when there is nothing unnatural in them. For my own part, I endeavour to adhere to the primitive ideas above-mentioned, and therefore I consider the baptizing my children, not as directly implying that they have any interest in it, or in the things signified in it, but as a part of my own profession of Christianity, * and consequently as an obligation which, as such, I am under, to educate my children, and also to instruct my servants in the principles of the Christian religion. In this view of the ordinance of baptism, infants are *indirectly* interested in it, whether they adhere to the profession of Christianity, and thereby secure the blessings of it, when they become adults, so as to think and act for themselves, or not.

It is possible that, at this time, and in these parts of the world, we may not see much reason for positive institutions; but with the *Jews*, and indeed throughout all the *East*, nothing is more common than to express sentiments and purposes by appropriate actions. Now, washing with water so naturally expresses purity of heart, and

* See Vol. II. p. 334.

is a thing so agreeable in itself, especially in hot countries, that we cannot wonder that it should be made choice of, to denote the profession of a religion, which brings men under the strictest obligations to repent and reform their lives, and particularly that *John the Baptist*, whose more immediate business it was to preach repentance, should be directed to enjoin it.

Whether baptism be of earlier antiquity than *John the Baptist*, I own, I have not been able to satisfy myself. *Maimonides*, and the earliest Jewish writers, speak of solemn baptism as a necessary attendant on circumcision, and also as a practice that had been immemorial among them; so that whether it was tacitly implied in the original institution of circumcision, (which, indeed, seems to require, at least, ablution, in which water was made use of,) or whether it had been adopted afterwards, as naturally expressive of the new converts cleansing themselves from the impurities of their former state of *Heathenism*, it was probably the custom of the Jews at the time of our Saviour. If this was the case, and the Jews did universally both circumcise and baptize all who were capable of it, when families were converted to their religion, there was both the less reason for explaining the nature and use of the rite, on the first mention of it, and our Lord, if he did not disapprove of the practice, had still less occasion to describe, more particularly than he has done, who were the proper subjects of baptism; and we may rather suppose, that he would have expressly restricted it to adult persons, if he had intended that the prevailing custom should be altered. Consequently, when a master of a family was converted to Christianity, he would, of course, baptize all his household, and consider himself as bound to instruct them in the principles of the religion which he professed. This is an obligation which is held peculiarly sacred over all the East, and the pains which masters of families take in consequence of it seldom fail of success. There is no point that a *Mahometan* is more intent upon, than making his children, and servants also, good Musselmen; but when they quit their service, they give themselves no concern about their religion.

The readiness with which the Jewish people in general conformed to "the baptism of John," seems to have arisen from their easily entering into the propriety of it, as expressing resolutions of repentance and greater purity of life, by way of preparation for the kingdom of the *Messiah*; and they seem to have expected that the *Messiah*, or his forerunner, had a right to expect some such compliance from them. For the Pharisees say to *John*, (*John* i. 25,) "Why baptizest thou, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" I do not see, however, that they had any reason to expect the institution of baptism, in particular, as a religious rite, under the *Messiah*; for though it was prophesied of him, that he should "sprinkle * many nations," (*Isaiah* lii. 15,) I do not suppose that the Jews understood the prophecy as implying any more than that he would convert, cleanse, or purify them.

* *Sturte* according to *Stock*. See Vol. XII. p. 202, Note ¶.

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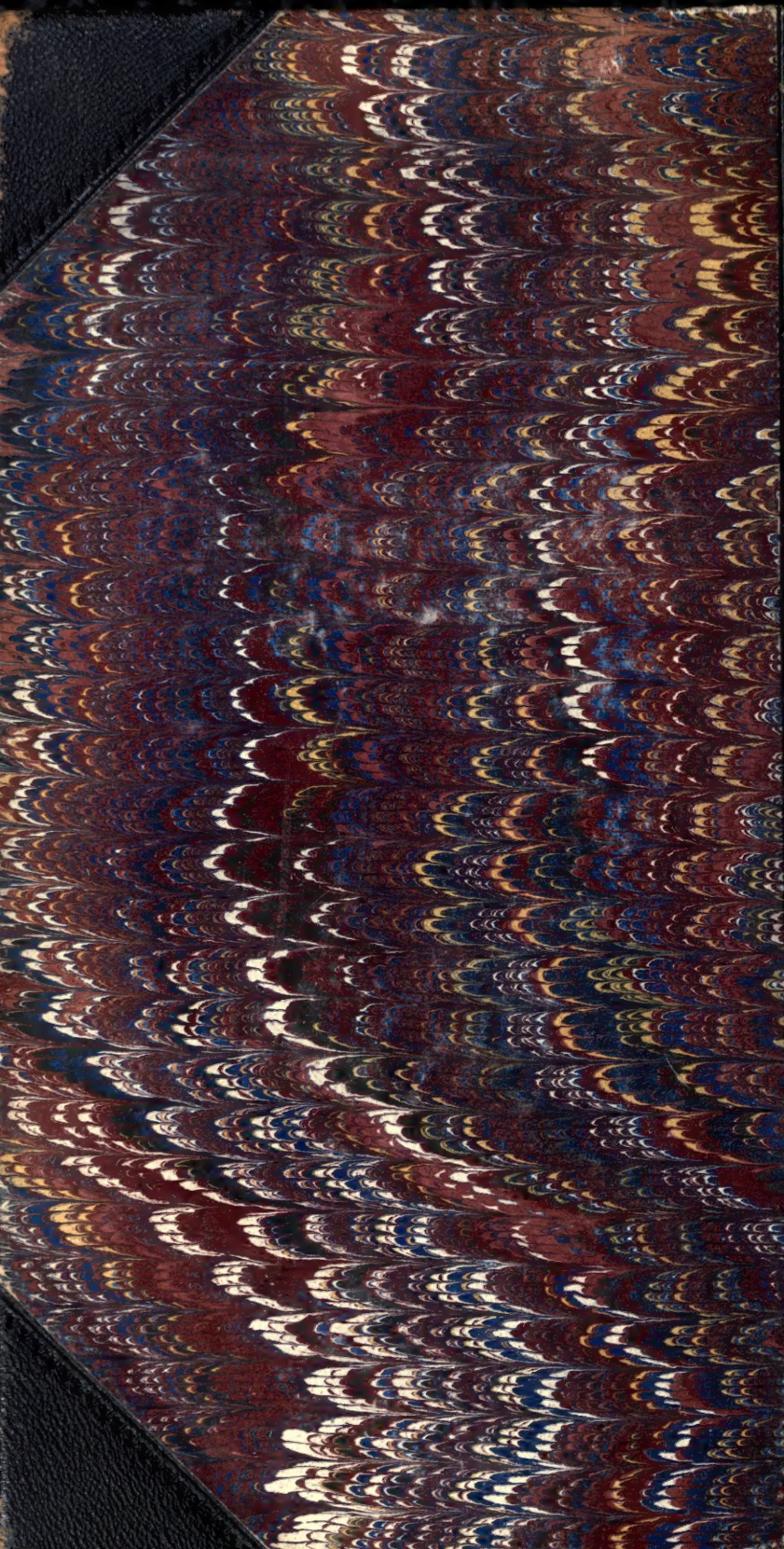
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